

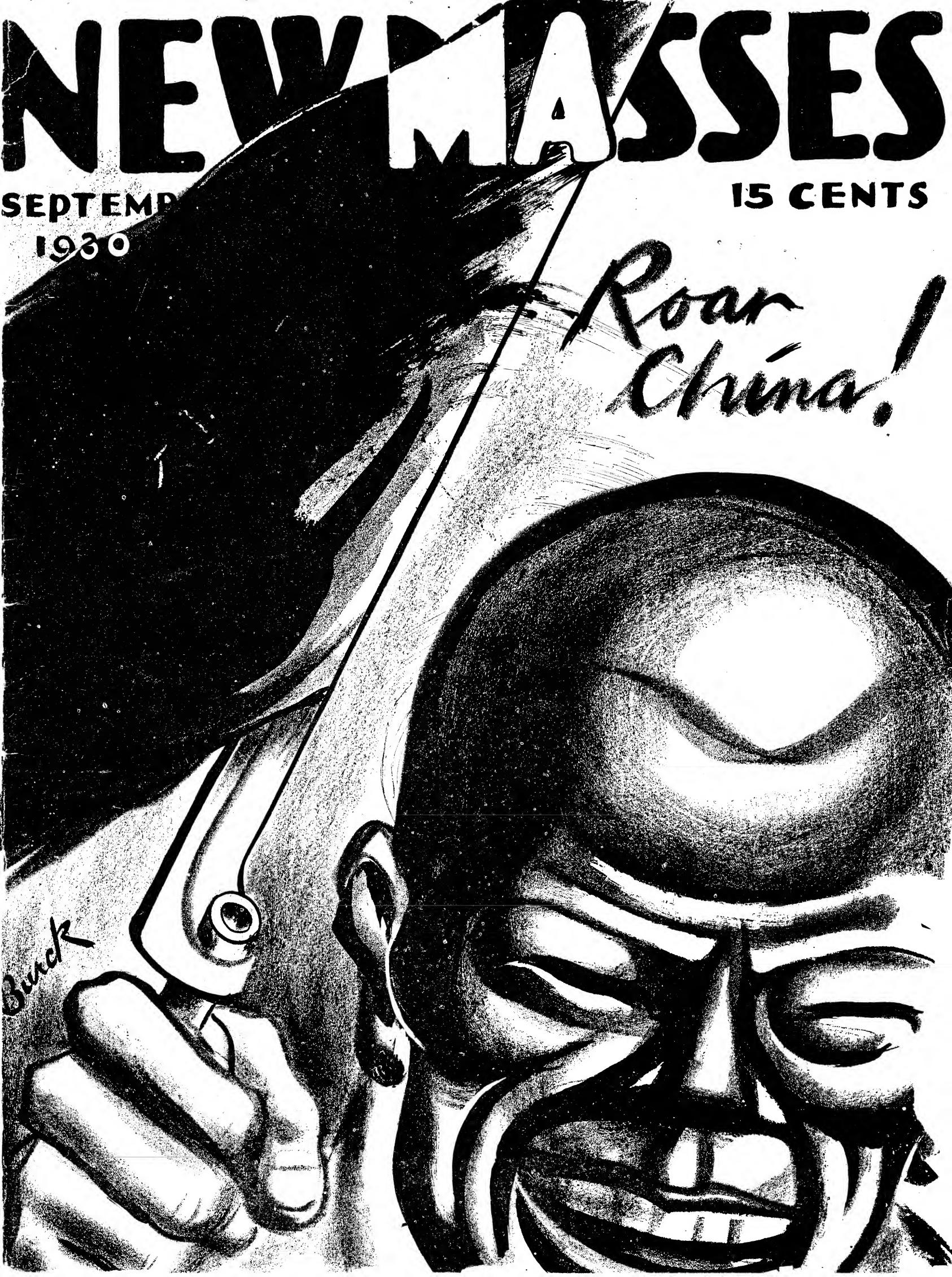
NEWMASSES

SEPTEMBER
1930

15 CENTS

*Roar
China!*

Buck



NEWMASSES

SEPTEMBER
1930

15 CENTS

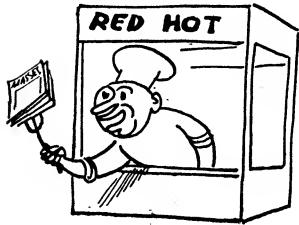
*Roar
China!*

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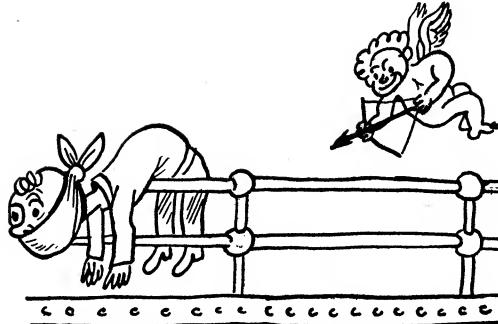


GREAT MOMENTS IN HISTORY

as seen by Wm. Gropper



1910—Piet Vlag, cooks up a hot idea—he starts the Masses.



1917—Everybody loves us but the government's agin us. The Masses is suppressed.



1926—Hello, Cap! Here we are again. The New Masses appears.

DEAR READERS:

The *New Masses* has survived another difficult year. It was rough sailing. For 12 months the staff has lived on coffee and crullers. Artists and writers worked without pay. The auditor has just gone over our books and he can't prove how we could have existed. But we did.

It is another of those miracles that has been happening every year since the old *Masses* began in 1910.

Loyal readers sent us new readers; and they sent us what they could spare.

We have been criticized, praised and damned in a thousand letters for 12 months. That's life.

But the past year of the *New Masses* has been worth living. A new group of young writers and artists of genuine talent have appeared. They brought with them a fresh new vigor and a new life. Meanwhile established writers have contributed some of their best work.

Circulation has increased rapidly. The magazine is reaching thousands of young workers, students and intellectual rebels in factories, workers clubs, colleges, and literary groups in this country and abroad.

It is recognized now that the *New Masses* has a real and solid function in the revolutionary movement in America.

If our readers will help we will live another year. *New Masses* can become a powerful medium.

We need 10,000 new subscribers. If you are a sincere friend of the *New Masses* you will help us in at least one of the four ways we suggest below.

Use the blanks and begin now.

FOUR WAYS:

- Send us at least one new yearly sub. Or renew your own. (Use blank No. 1.)
- Send us as many 4 months trial subs at 50 cents each as you can secure—or pay for. (Blank No. 2.)
- Take a bundle of the NEW MASSES every month. We believe there are 100 readers who will take 10 copies of every issue for a year. (\$1.00 a month). This alone means a thousand new readers. (Blank No. 3.)
- If you can't get subs—help the drive with a donation. (Use the last blank.)

1. ——————

Here's \$1.50 for one year's sub

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City
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3. ——————

Send copies every month to:

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Street
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City
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2. ——————

Enclosed 50 cents for four months trial sub

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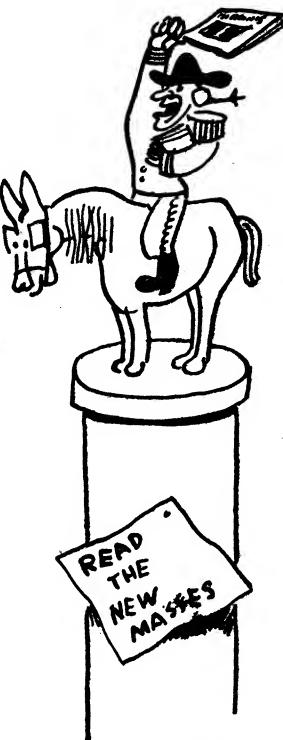
4. ——————

Enclosed \$ for New Masses Drive

Name
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1930—Lafayette, get that subscription—we are still here!

NEW MASSES

1910—Fifth Year of the New Masses -- 1926 -- Twenty First Year of the Masses—1930

VOLUME 6

SEPTEMBER, 1930

NUMBER 4

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357

WALT CARMON, *Managing Editor*

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MICHAEL GOLD

NOTES OF THE MONTH

"The Soviet flag is flying over a greater area in China today than is held by the counter-revolutionary government."

The sentence is culled from a manifesto issued this May, calling for an all-China Soviet Congress in November.

Is there another John Reed in America? We would advise him to hasten to China, to be present at another ten days which will soon surely shake the world. Roar, China! shake the pillars of this capitalist world, until it crashes around our ears, and in the debris we can set manfully and cheerfully to work on something better. We are tired of this vast, horrible machine dedicated only to the making of money. We are tired of caste, of cant and hypocrisy, of cruelty and corruption. The joy has gone out of work; it is commercialized. The joy has gone out of play; it is commercialized. There is no honest friendship under capitalism; there is no love; it is no society of human beings, living for each other's mutual advancement, but a great pack of ravening wolves.

Turn wolf, or starve to death; this is the choice capitalism lays before each individual. We are sick of being forced to make the choice. It has all become a cheap racket; but life is surely better than that. Roar, China, roar!

The Classic Model—

One must read deeply into the body of Marxian literature to understand these great human earthquakes that are shaking the world in China, India, Soviet Russia, and Europe.

The aim is a working-class government that will communize land, factories and every other means of production, and administer them for the welfare of the masses, instead of for the profit of a few thousand millionaires. The political means chosen for this transition is the Soviets. Human history is becoming a conscious planned development. Revolutions are no longer the blind spontaneous accidental affairs of the past. A classic technique has been worked out.

Karl Marx was the Darwin who demonstrated the laws that operate in political upheavals. It was his study of the French Commune that gave Lenin and the Russian Revolution the wisdom and direction to save that revolution from the ignominious defeat that marked the Socialist revolution in Germany.

No bourgeois parliaments, no class collaboration! This is the rock on which the French Commune went down in precious proletarian blood, the rock that Marx charted, that Lenin avoided, and that every real revolution from now on will watch for through the darkest storms.

Nothing can be expected from the upper classes but resistance when there is any prospect of real change. In peaceful times the bourgeoisie will fight economic change by professing the parliamentary "socialism" that is growing so fashionable and safe. In periods of disturbance they will shoot, imprison, behead and torture workers as in the past.

Sacco and Vanzetti—

It is the third anniversary of their murder of Sacco and Vanzetti. Mass-meetings are being held all over America to honor the memory of the "good shoemaker and poor fish-peddler."

The story will never die. It has become part of the new proletarian mythos, that great symphony of blood and tears whose vibrations will yet shatter every throned injustice.

Sacco and Vanzetti were Workers. In cotton mills, steel mills, coal mines, and on the long bread lines of America, behold the Workers! this base upon which the social pyramid is builded! this nation within the nation; this caste of untouchables for whom few writers speak, few scientists think! When there is work, they are harnessed to the great plow of American prosperity, given food enough to keep them fit. When there is no work, they are turned out to starve; the land, the factories, all the tools of work belong to the masters.

Slaves; forty million Americans are wage-slaves! To rebel means to chance the physical death; not to rebel means to die the spiritual death. Sacco and Vanzetti knew the proletarian hell; they were immigrants and Workers. They chose to become rebels against capitalism. For this they were killed by the masters.

It was no accidental slip-up on the part of a few prejudiced judges or district attorneys! it was the normal course of capitalist justice. The Worker who agitates against wage-slavery is always to be punished; he is guilty and dangerous, he is a "mad dog."

Give Us Barrabas!

Every month hundreds of proved axe-murderers, torch-slayers, rapers, kidnappers, forgers, gangsters, blackmailers and other proved criminals are released by pardon boards from American prisons: America respects them, feels a kinship.

But Mooney and Billings are still in jail after thirteen years; there was no mercy for Sacco and Vanzetti; there is no mercy waiting for the six youthful Negro and white Worker-militants who face the electric chair in Georgia; or for the farm workers who led



HUGO GELLERT

TOM MOONEY'S MAY DAY SMILE: The courageous fighter, now spending his 18th year in prison, from a drawing by Hugo Gellert, made on May 1, 1930, at San Quentin.

a strike in Imperial Valley recently, and now are serving a term of 42 years; or for the Gastonia strikers.

Hundreds of such cases in America; and each time the capitalist white-collar mob howls for lynching and blood.

A pattern has been fixed; we know what capitalist justice is like; have no illusions; the Workers feel the reality of all this white terror, and swear solemnly: "Our day will come!"

Kitchener said at the beginning of the war: England will lose all the battles, but will win the war. England did not win the war; American plutocracy won it; but we can truthfully say:

Labor may lose all the battles, but it will win the class-war. Labor has seemed to lose every battle, every strike and frame-up for the past hundred years, and yet today there is a Soviet Russia, a nascent Soviet China, a great international labor movement. Labor is doggedly and surely winning its great war for the management of the world.

Proletarian Literature—

Every day this is evidenced, too, on the cultural front. It is difficult for the bourgeois intellectuals to understand or acknowledge this. One of their favorite superstitions is that culture is always the product of a few divinely-ordained individuals, operating in a social vacuum.

We know and assert that culture is a social product; as bees who feed upon sumach or buckwheat produce honey of those flavors, so will the individuals living within a specific social environment give off an inevitably-flavored culture.

It could not be otherwise. Who could expect a Walt Whitman at the court of Louis the Fourteenth? Who, among the cacophonies and tensions of a modern industrial city, would ask a musician to originate bland gavottes and minuets?

But the intellectuals sneer at the idea of a proletarian literature. They will acknowledge the possibility of nationalist cultures; but they have not reached the understanding that the national idea is dying, and that the class ideologies are alone real in the world today.

I believe I was the first writer in America to herald the advent of a world proletarian literature as a concomitant to the rise of the world proletariat. This was in an article published

in the *Liberator* for 1920, called, "Towards Proletarian Art." Mine was a rather mystic and intuitive approach; nothing had yet been published in English on this theme; the idea was not yet in the air, as it is today; I was feeling my way.

But the little path has since become a highroad. Despite the bourgeois ultra-leftism of Trotsky in his *Literature and Revolution*, where he predicts there will not be time enough to develop a proletarian literature, this greatest and most universal of literary schools is now sweeping across the world.

One would not want a better text for a survey of the new movement than this paragraph from the conservative *Japan Magazine* on the situation in Japan:

"It appears that the greatest demand for the year was for proletarian literature, due perhaps to the excitement over the arrest of so many youths and maidens for being guilty of dangerous thought. The result is that henceforth there will be a more clearly marked distinction between the writers of this school and authors in general."

In North China there is the powerful Owl Society, with a string of newspapers, magazines, bookshops and publishing houses, all devoted to the spread of proletarian literature.

Thousands of books and articles on the theories of proletarian literature have been published in Soviet Russia, in Germany, Japan, China, France, England, and other countries. There is not a language in the world today in which a vigorous bold youth is not experimenting with the materials of proletarian literature. It is a world phenomenon; and it grows, changes, criticizes itself, expands without the blessing of all the official mandarins and play-actor iconoclasts and psalm-singing Humanists of the moribund bourgeois culture. It does not need them any longer; it will soon boot them into their final resting places in the museum.

No, the bourgeois intellectuals tell us; there can be no such thing as a proletarian literature. We answer briefly: There is. Then they say; it is mediocre; where is your Shakespeare? And we answer: Wait ten years more. He is on his way. We gave you a Lenin; we will give you a proletarian Shakespeare, too; if that is so important.

To us the culture of the world's millions is more important; the soil must be prepared; we know our tree is sound; we are sure of the fruit: we promise you a hundred Shakespeares.

Dogma versus Law—

We have only one magazine in America: the *New Masses*, dedicated to proletarian literature. And there is no publishing house of standing and intelligent direction to help clarify the issues. Nearest is the International Publishers perhaps, but this house devotes itself solely to a rather academic approach to economics and makes little attempt to influence either the popular mind or our intellectuals. It is as stodgy and unenterprising, in a Communist way, as the Yale University Press, and similar organizations.

If there were a live publishing house here, such as the *Cenit* of Madrid, for instance, it could issue a series of translations of proletarian novels, poetry, criticism that might astound some of our intellectuals. There would be a clarification, too, for some of our own adherents.

For proletarian literature is a living thing. It is not based on a set of fixed dogmas, anymore than is Communism or the science of biology.

Churches are built on dogma. The Catholic Church is the classic illustration of how the rule of dogma operates. Here is a great mass political and business movement that hypnotizes its victims with a set of weird formulas of magic which must not be tested or examined but must be swallowed with faith.

In Marxism or any other science there is no dogma; there are laws which have been discovered running through the phenomena of nature. These laws must not be taken on faith. They are the result of experiment and statistics, and they are meant to be tested daily. If they fail to work, they can be discarded; they are constantly being discarded.

The law of class struggle is a Marxian discovery that has been tested, and that works, and that gives one a major clue to the movements of man in the mass.

In proletarian literature, there are several laws which seem to be demonstrable. One of them is that all culture is the reflection

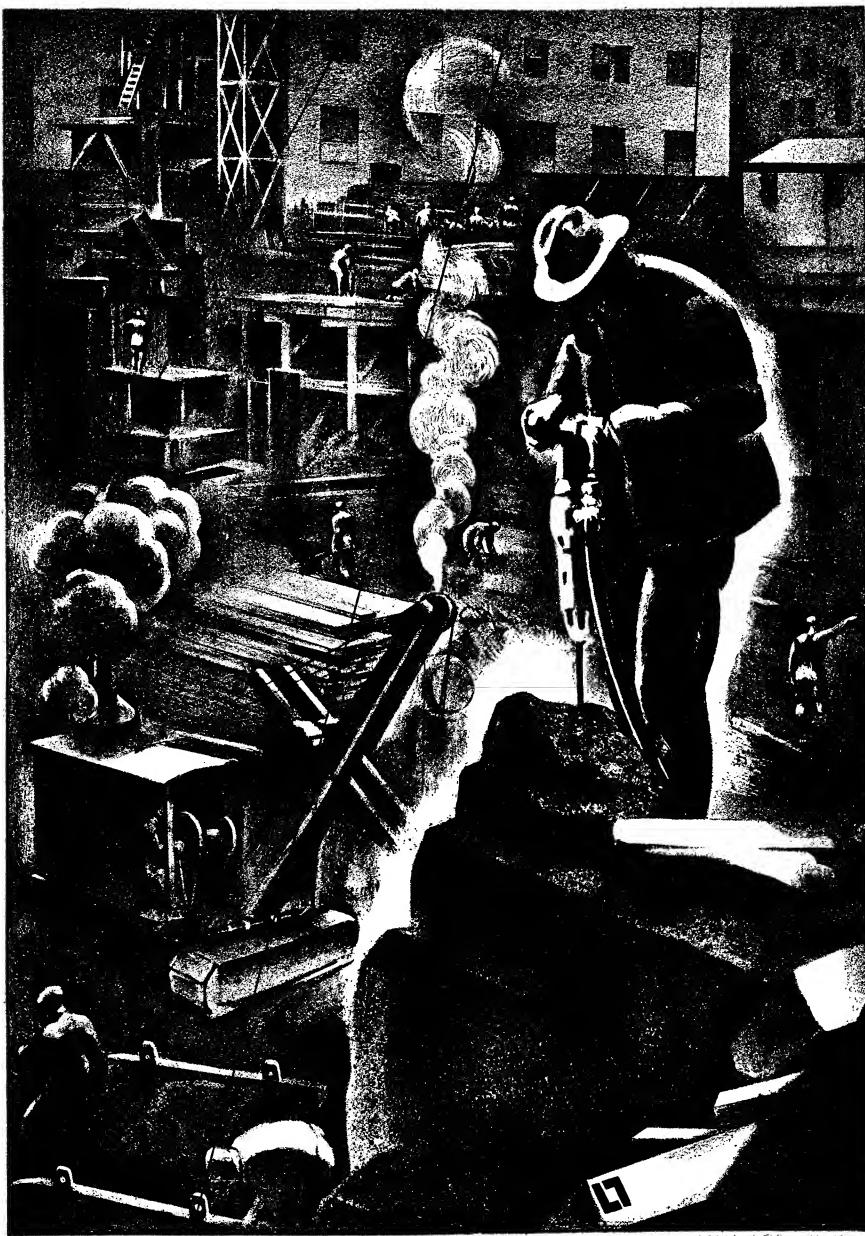


TOM MOONEY'S MAY DAY SMILE: *The courageous fighter, now spending his 13th year in prison, from a drawing by Hugo Gellert, made on May 1, 1930, at San Quentin.*



HUGO
GELLERT

TOM MOONEY'S MAY DAY SMILE: *The courageous fighter, now spending his 13th year in prison, from a drawing by Hugo Gellert, made on May 1, 1930, at San Quentin.*



THE BIRTH OF A SKYSCRAPER

Louis Lozowick

of a specific class society. Another is, that bourgeois culture is in process of decay, just as bourgeois society is in a swift decline.

The class that will inherit the world will be the proletariat, and every indication points inevitably to the law that this proletarian society will, like its predecessors, create its own culture.

This we can be sure of; upon this we all agree. Proletarian literature will reflect the struggle of the workers in their fight for the world. It portrays the life of the workers; not as do the vulgar French populists and American jazzmaniacs, but with a clear revolutionary point; otherwise it is meaningless, merely a new *frisson*.

Within this new world of proletarian literature, there are many living forms. It is dogmatic folly to seize upon any single literary form, and erect it into a pattern for all proletarian literature.

The Russian Futurists, tried to do this; they held the stage for a while, but are rapidly being supplanted.

My belief is, that a new form is evolving, which one might name the "Proletarian Realism." Here are some of its elements, as I see them:

1.

Proletarian Realism—

Because the Workers are skilled machinists, sailors, farmers and weavers, the proletarian writer must describe their work with technical precision. The Workers will scorn any vague fumbling

poetry, much as they would scorn a sloppy workman. Hemingway and others have had the intuition to incorporate this proletarian element into their work, but have used it for the *frisson*, the way some actors try to imitate gangsters or men. These writers build a machine, it functions, but it produces nothing; it has not been planned to produce anything; it is only an adult toy.

2.

Proletarian realism deals with the *real conflicts* of men and women who work for a living. It has nothing to do with the sickly mental states of the idle Bohemians, their subtleties, their sentimentalities, their fine-spun affairs. The worst example and the best of what we do not want to do is the spectacle of Proust, master-masturbator of the bourgeois literature. We know the suffering of hungry, persecuted and heroic millions is enough of a theme for anyone, without inventing these precious silly little agonies.

3.

Proletarian realism is never pointless. It does not believe in literature for its own sake, but in literature that is useful, has a social function. Every major writer has always done this in the past; but it is necessary to fight the battle constantly, for there are more intellectuals than ever who are trying to make literature a plaything. Every poem, every novel and drama, must have a social theme, or it is merely confectionery.

4.

As few words as possible. We are not interested in the verbal acrobats—this is only another form for bourgeois idleness. The Workers live too close to reality to care about these literary show-offs, these verbalist heroes.

5.

To have the courage of the proletarian experience. This was the chief point of my "mystic" essay in 1920; let us proletarians write with the courage of our own experience. I mean, if one is a tanner and writer, let one dare to write the drama of a tannery; or of a clothing shop, or of a ditch-digger's life, or of a hobo. Let the bourgeois writers tell us about their spiritual drunks and super-refined Parisian emigres; or about their spiritual marriages and divorces, etc., that is their world; we must write about our own mud-puddle; it will prove infinitely more important. This is being done by the proletarian realism.

6.

Swift action, clear form, the direct line, cinema in words; this seems to be one of the principles of proletarian realism. It knows exactly what it believes and where it is going; this makes for its beautiful youthful clarity.

7.

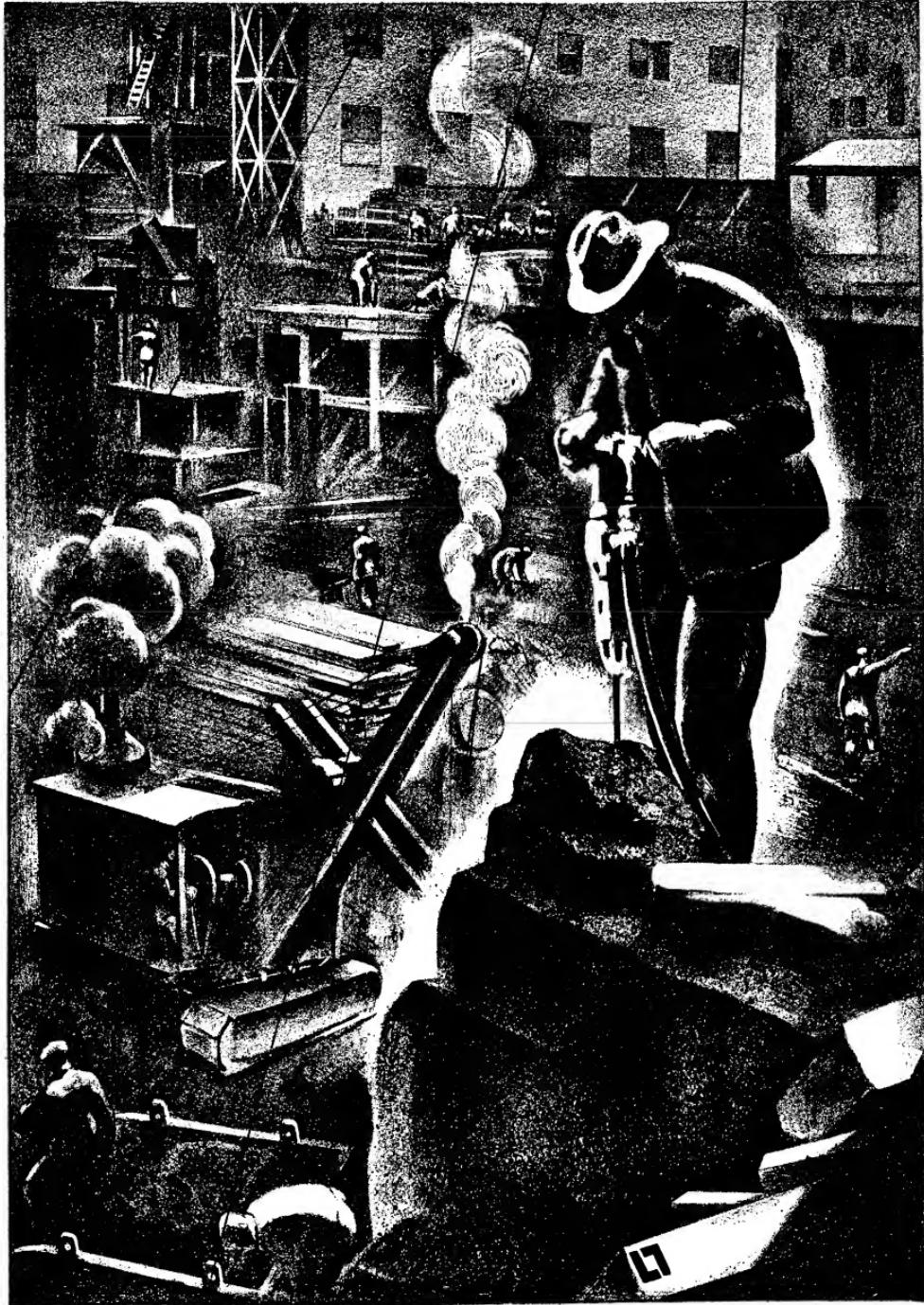
Away with drabness, the bourgeois notion that the Worker's life is sordid, the slummer's disgust and feeling of futility. There is horror and drabness in the Worker's life; and we will portray it; but we know this is not the last word; we know that this manure heap is the hope of the future; we know that not pessimism, but revolutionary elan will sweep this mess out of the world forever.

8.

Away with all lies about human nature. We are scientists; we know what a man thinks and feels. Everyone is a mixture of motives; we do not have to lie about our hero in order to win our case. It is this honesty alone, frank as an unspoiled child's, that makes proletarian realism superior to the older literary schools.

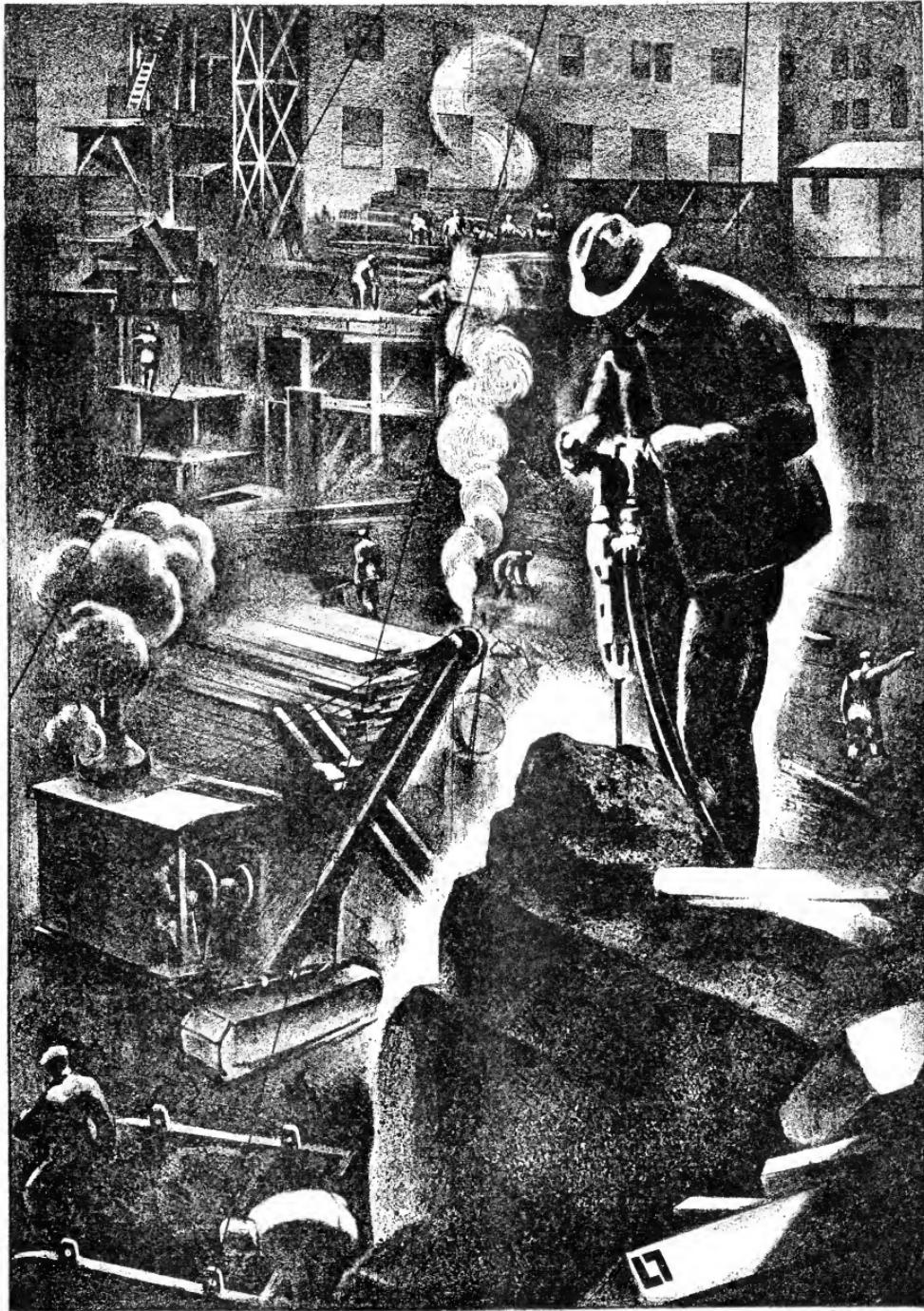
9.

No straining or melodrama or other effects; life itself is the supreme melodrama. Feel this intensely, and everything becomes poetry—the new poetry of materials, of the so-called "common man," the Worker moulding his real world.



THE BIRTH OF A SKYSCRAPER

Louis Lozowick



THE BIRTH OF A SKYSCRAPER

Louis Lozowick

HERMAN SPECTOR

THE GOLD NUGGETS

Joe Paladino worked in a warehouse near the Harlem River, lifting rolls of carpet to wherever he was told to lift them. Usually that was: Up. They were damn heavy rolls too, you would never guess how heavy until you tried lifting one yourself, and beside the carpet, there was the linoleum. It was the linoleum that did for Joe, in the end. He was never such a strong guy; he had been ruptured twice already, and would give a lot to get a softer job some place. But try and get it. Yeah.

Joe had been out of work before. So it was enough that this job seemed steady, and he was even able to buy a little furniture, and a radio, on the installment plan, and move in with the wife to a flat in the Bronx, a block away from the Third Avenue El, and a five-minute walk from Crotona Park.

The park! Every morning Joe took the kid there, listening to its gurgling delight, and watching it play with dirt. Joe taught it how to sift out the little stones in the hand, opening the fingers a little, and he shouted to the kid: Look—gold nuggets! And the kid shrieked joyously, and ran to carry little fistfuls of dirt to his hand. Ah, thought Joe, it's great to be a married man—to have a woman who cares for you and looks after you, and rubs your body with alcohol when you come home limp after a tough day, aching all over; and it's great to have a sweet little flower of a kid, to hold it up in the air and kiss its little behind, and every day to see it grow. Great stuff! Yeah.

Joe was what you might call a glutton for punishment. By his wan face and the distended veins in his arms you could see that he could not last long at the job, but must end by becoming miserably punch-drunk, and he would be of no use to anyone, not even himself. But a wage slave lives from one day to the next, and if tomorrow brings no worse than today, OK. Hold on to what you got, for the abyss yawns below. Joe was a young man, but his mind was old and tired. And his wife, too, though she looked so neat and dainty, she was no spring chicken now. At the age of eleven she had been scrubbing other people's floors for them, and then the factories got her, and kind of spoiled her complexion for good. She was very thankful to get married, and she loved Joe very much. It was hard to manage, but she managed. She didn't have it so bad off like the taxi-driver's wife who lived next door, whose husband left her for weeks at a time when work was slow, and came back soured. The taxi-driver's wife swore that some day he would not find her there when he came back, but so far he always had, and took it as a matter of course that she would be there, with all three kids cowering around her, and only a ludicrous show of defiance. So Joe's wife thought she was very lucky to have such a good husband. And Joe thought it was great to be a respectable citizen earning twenty-two dollars a week, and actually to have a little time in the evening to smoke and read a newspaper, and to be able to get a seat on the train, sometimes, going home. They were very, very simple people.

Things got a little slack in the carpet line, though it seemed to Joe that the carpets were just as big and as heavy as usual. And they were beginning to notice that he was not the strongest man in the world. There was a big German Jew named Laber who did unloading work downstairs at the track, and he had been laid off last week. He lived on Suffolk Street, downtown, had four young children, and always brought along big baloney sandwiches for lunch. Laber used to tell Joe how he used to be a big candy-store owner on the east side, but his oldest boy Hymie ruined his business by eating all the stock. Now that Laber was out, Joe was supposed to do his work too. Joe was energetic, quick, and knew the knack of lifting from long practice, so the foreman

thought he would hold on to him and let Laber go. Laber had a dazed look when he got the bounce. What wage slave hasn't? The job is hell, it stinks, and the only thing worse is to lose the job. Who knows what happened to the beefy German-Jew? Who cares? He was swallowed up, perhaps, in a murky sea of want-ads, begging, bosses' refusals, sneers, starvation, garbage-bits of tragedy, futile clutching-at-wisps. Joe forgot all about Laber. His big worry was how to keep the job.

The warehouse, at intervals, was supplied with Big Business Bulletins from the main offices on Fifth Avenue. These bulletins were countersigned by geniuses who had probably studied the Psychology of Leadership at school. They were intended to bulldoze little fellers like Joe Paladino. For example, they said: "Ideas? Have you any Ideas of how to do the job better, more efficiently? Let us know. Don't hide your light under a bushel." Joe tried to think of some good ideas, of how to do the job better. But he needn't have troubled. The geniuses worked it all out by themselves, in a cute, ingenious way. They laid off a goodly part of the force, and made the rest do double the work for the same money. Or rather, for less money, as they put in a new Golden Rule about working overtime for nothing. You don't have to go to college to think them things out. On the other hand, maybe you do. At least, you must keep far away from the lifting end of the game. Those that lift can never qualify as geniuses to Help Make Business Better. Joe Paladino would never have thought of clever Ideas like those on a bet. You have to hand it to the geniuses...

Grimly, Joe did what he was told to do. He was used to taking punches, and the Boss always hit below the belt. Mornings, he had to be dragged out of bed. He lived in a stupor. No more walks in the park with the kid. The kid never saw him, hardly. He came home nights, when the streets seemed to be melting from the heat under the glaring lamps, and his wife arose from sleep to put his food on the table and wash the dishes. And every day, the job became less secure. It was a question as to how much longer Joe was going to be allowed to remain a respectable citizen earning twenty-two dollars a week. A question that was pondered long upon, undoubtedly, by the geniuses. And the conclusion was: we can afford to let this man go. Scientific, impersonal—just like that. A simple matter of mathematics. Profit and loss. On Saturday the foreman called Joe aside and sweetly told him he was fired. Why? why? (Can you beat it, Joe had the nerve to ask

why!) The foreman looked sorely at him. "When ya took dat last carload of linoleum down, I seen how ya got scared y' might hoit yaself, and you was too slow too. We can't have no weak guys workin here. Dat's all."

Returning home, there was a seething in Joe's brain. He looked out of the windows of the El, at the fantasmagorical blur of buildings, passing a rapid succession of alternate 3 room flats, exactly like his own. All these people—poor slobs like himself—vainly trying to build a home and happiness on the treacherous sands of a job—bringing up kids whose future, wrapped in mist, was at the mercy of a rubicund cigarmaking boss who operated at central offices and employed impersonal, scientific geniuses to contrive plans for efficiently running the plant—he felt like yelling into the tenements: Stop! Think! What do our lives hold for us? Are we worms! Are we men? Why should we take it on the button instead of hitting back? Stop!... It was another stifling night. He grunted to his neighbors, grouped around the stoop. They were all old before their time. There was the skinny, hysterical Jewess who was always screaming at her kids. She had been sent to the bughouse twice. There



MADE IN AMERICA Hans Scherfig



MADE IN AMERICA

Hans Scherfig



PORTRAIT OF A PORTRAIT PAINTER

I. Klein

was the taxi-driver's wife. She had a goiter. The doctor told her to eat only soft foods, and try not to have another baby. There was the fruit-peddler; he had diabetes and varicose veins; his wife had cancer. Plenty of diseases to go around. The Boss hands them out unstintingly. Joe climbed up the stairs, stopping a while at each landing.

He pushed open the door, and was in the kitchen. He turned on the light. A few cockroaches hurried to shelter. Joe studied the oilcloth design on the floor. There was a stink of dead rat in the plaster walls. Well, they would have to get out of here. The furniture people would be on their heads in a week or two: a marshall would bust in the door and take all the stuff out. What if they had paid in over a hundred dollars on it? The law was made by businessmen for businessmen. Laborers exist only to make such people fat. It was all written down, in cultured terminology, on legal-looking documents.

She was still sleeping. Dog-tired. Recently she had been taking in home-work from the factories, because they were going to have another kid, and that was an expense. Joe shook her a little, and she sat up swiftly. She saw by his face what it was all about. Clasping him in her arms, she sobbed noiselessly. The kid would have to go to a nursery again. Gee, that was tough. Now the kid lay in trusting sleep in the crib. And what about the next one? Joe's wife got up dully and put supper on the table. A man must eat. Gee, but she was a good woman.

Haggard and worn they awoke in the morning. Sunday. It was very, very silent in the house. After breakfast, Joe picked up the kid and went to the park. The kid chattered in funny, original vocables. Picking a fairly clean spot on the grass, Joe lay down in the sun and let the kid run around and play. His head ached like hell. He felt like vomiting. The kid came running up with a little fistful of dirt, shrieking joyously: Ooh! Gold nuggets! Gold nuggets! . . . Joe took the dirt in his hand, and sifted out the little stones. Gold nuggets. Yeah. So's your old man. Pah! His hand clenched them fiercely, and he flung them away. They're stones!, he hollered at the kid—Stones!

The Two Railway Cars From Nizne Verecke

By F. C. Weiskopf

We two
Railway cars
from Nizne Verecke
In Slovakia
Raise a solemn protest!

Yesterday there comes a man,
Gives us a smart coat of paint,
And writes on the boards:
"46 men or 6 horses".
Comrades,
Railway cars of the world,
That concerns you!
Out to protest!
Demonstrate!

. . . what,
you remain dumb?
You do nothing?
True,
We two
Are stupid.
For six years
We have not travelled farther
Than Cop—

And you
Are clever!
Have travelled far
And wide in the world,
Have seen London and Rome
And know Paris!
But nevertheless:
How could you in the meantime
Forget
What has happened?

Oh, we are not addressing you,
The ritzy cars of the Compagnie
Des grands express et des wagons lits;
Not the cars with soft cushions,
Who do not know there was—WAR!
Not the first and second classes,
But you
Masses:
Box cars!
Cattle trucks!
Tenders!
Caboses!
Proletarian cars on all railway lines!
Demonstrate!

. . . what?
Are we perhaps like that creature —Man,
That they dare to slaughter us again?!
On to the streets!
Come out!
Show your power!
Never again forty-six . . . Stop!
Or rather,
Once more
Thunder over the steaming earth:
"46 men or 6 horses
FOR THE RED ARMY!"

Translated by W. N. CLARK, Berlin.

SEPTEMBER, 1930



PORTRAIT OF A PORTRAIT PAINTER

I. Klein

SEPTEMBER, 1930



PORTRAIT OF A PORTRAIT PAINTER

I. Klein

**MASKED MOB DRAGS
NEGRO FROM JAIL AND
SHOOTS HIM TO DEATH**

Sheriff Dealt Blow On Head When He Resisted Mob,
Is In Serious Condition. Prisoner Was Charged
With Attack On White Girl—Negro Also
Lynched In Mississippi.

**N. S. MOB LYNCHES
NEGRO WORKER
IS LYNCHED BY
MOBILE MOB**

Roast Man to Death,
Drag Body by Auto
and Hang It

**TWO NEGROES KILLED
IN TENN., TEXAS**

**WORKERS ROUSED
TO FURY OVER
IND. LYNCHINGS**

West Meetings in
Middle West
Aug. 18.—Under the
housands of Negro
ized in the Middle
working last week in
the Marion class pro-
the bosses' double
lynching
Wounded Railway
Cop in Defense

Hunting A Third Who
Aug. 18.—Under the
housands of Negro
ized in the Middle
working last week in
the Marion class pro-
the bosses' double
lynching
Wounded Railway
Cop in Defense

Stop Lynching!

**THOUSANDS SEE
TWO LYNCHED
IN INDIANA**

**KILL NEGRO AND
BURN HIS BODY**

**TEXAS LYNCHERS
BURN 3 BLOCKS
OF NEGRO HOMES**

**LYNCH 65 YEAR
OLD WOMAN**

**LYNCHED
NEGRO WORKER**

William Siegel

IN "CIVILIZED" AMERICA - FIFTEEN NEGRO WORKERS HAVE BEEN LYNCHED THIS YEAR.

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AGNES SMEDLEY**REVOLUTIONARY THEATRE IN CHINA**

Shanghai, which as early as 1905 was the home of the first modern Chinese theatre on the western plan, again has the honor of claiming the first revolutionary art theatre. In the first week of January the "Shanghai Art Theatre", which hopes to tread in the footsteps of the Moscow Art Theatre, made its bow to the world in a cold, unheated hall filled with cheap, hard chairs to seat 700 people—provided they jammed in like sardines. This they did, and more. The Theatre consists not only of actors, but of a whole theatrical association which now has some sixty young men and women, all of them revolutionary intellectuals inside and outside the universities. Their first performance, given in the mandarine, or national language, consisted of three one-act plays, *The Game of Love and Death*, by Romain Rolland—which they had radically abridged—, *The Second-Story Man*, by Upton Sinclair, and *The Coal Miners*, by the German, L. Maerden. Their next production will be Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the manuscript for this having been translated into Chinese from the Japanese version.

Since the establishment of the Republic there have been a number of attempts in Shanghai, Peking, and other leading cities, to establish modern theatrical groups, but for one reason or another they have been unable to live for long. The Shanghai Art Theatre hopes to succeed where others have failed. It may, for it is more social than its predecessors, most of whom were Bohemian intellectuals and individualists. The Shanghai Art Theatre is also composed of intellectuals, but they have been almost completely proletarianized by poverty, like so many of their kind, that they are at least revolutionary and have strong proletarian sympathies. They use a brilliant red curtain across the stage, and the vim and enthusiasm with which they emphasize every revolutionary line in their plays is worthy of their cause. In their first production they certainly lived up to the general opinion that the Chinese are "born actors", and they just as definitely refuted the statement of so many foreigners that the Chinese "have minds like corkscrews and faces like walls." It is doubtful if any European actor could teach the Chinese anything in the way of emotional expression.

In the plays of the new art theatre, one can not do what one does in the traditional Chinese theatre: recline back in comfortable seats, eat water-melon seeds and fruit, drink tea, and gossip about the private lives of various dancing girls, noted kidnappers, officials, and other powerful personalities in the audience. Instead, the audience in the cold, unheated hall of the Ningpo Merchants' Guild, the use of which the actors had secured on the strength of the Ningpo origin of some of their leaders, resembled very much a Russian audience. The seats wreathed back and forth across the hall and sometimes two persons were miraculously balanced on one chair. Their clothing was dark, drab, and poor, there was the careless disorder, good-nature and intellectual curiosity of Russian audiences, and nobody objected if you jammed him almost out of human shape as you passed. Here the feudal world of propriety and formality was gone. The audience bore a look of distinctive intelligence. In the freezing hall men and women crouched down in their chairs, their hands in their sleeves, their intense black eyes showing from over turned-up collars and mufflers. Apart from the writer and a friend, not another foreigner was in the hall. The gulf between most foreigners and Chinese in Shanghai is as deep as infinity. When the foreigners go to or produce plays in Shanghai, they choose such heavy intellectual food as *Charley's Aunt*, or *Baby Mine*, and any suggestion of a play with a social theme would brand you as a Bolshevik who ought to be locked up. Chinese occasionally go to see the foreign plays, but some of them explained there presence there in these words: "We go to study the social morality and ethics of the capitalist world."

Most of the actors in the new Shanghai Art Theatre speak only Chinese and Japanese—many are returned students from Japan—but one young actor who spoke English introduced himself and discussed the plays. "They are petit bourgeois," he began apologetically and a bit shame-faced. "The only one whose ideology is proletarian is the German play." With the suppression of every revolutionary thought today, he continued, they had to be

careful about what they present, and even as it is they cannot play in Chinese territory.

The three one-act plays of their first performance had been translated into Chinese by their own members; they had also built and painted all their own furniture and scenery, prepared their own costumes, and produced the film that accompanied one of the plays. The theatre is a cooperative association and its members work together and starve together. The acting was most uneven, but on the whole the men were better than the women. Some of the men and all the women lacked voice training. The girl cast in one of the leading roles, beautiful and willowy enough to enchant any Chinese aesthete, nevertheless retained the traditional high, thin, "canary voice", and one or two men retained the artificial intonations of the traditional stage. The make-ups were generally excellent and in the German play it was remarkable to see how easily a Chinese can be changed into a German face; the strikers might have been workingmen in any city in Germany. The acting was excellent in places, but at one time it broke down and every man on the stage—about a dozen of them—was weeping at the top of his voice at the tragedy that had overtaken the beloved strike leader. The audience, which was very critical throughout, watched this extravagant display of emotion in interested silence, perhaps wondering why Germans bawl so loud. At other times they expressed themselves in no uncertain manner. When Upton Sinclair's play was given a man near me growled from behind his high collar, "Sinclair is a sentimental!" This play was, however, technically interesting, for it had been cleverly combined with the film in the fashion of the Piscator Communist stage in Berlin. This clearly showed that these young Chinese actors were in touch with the latest stage technique in Europe. Another instance of the audience expressing itself whole-heartedly was when the hero in Rolland's play made tempestuous love to the heroine—and she a married woman at that—even embracing and kissing her right before the 700 pairs of eyes unaccustomed to such sights. The audience rocked with laughter. A girl in a French cap next to me rocked back and forth in astonished merriment, holding her hands over her mouth, but keeping her eyes free to see what was coming next. When the handsome hero at last gave up love for the revolution, the audience gave him its most enthusiastic support. The actor who drew up an indictment against the government in the same play was so heartily applauded that it seemed the audience had in mind a government nearer home. Every actor who uttered one revolutionary sentence could depend upon the determined support of the audience. In the last play, the old German strike leader cried out that he had lost all his loved ones, and that he would now give his life in an uncompromising fight for the revolution. The audience sprang to its feet in excitement and shouted "Hao! Hao!" (Good! Good!)

The deep response of the audience to the plays, which kept them sitting in such a cold place from seven to eleven at night, is typical of Chinese audiences of this kind. No one takes the modern theatre lightly. One recalls an incident in the past year when another group of players, but of a bohemian nature, produced Oscar Wilde's *Salome* in Shanghai. The mother of Salome sat quietly in the audience and she was broad-minded enough to watch her daughter dance and half undress on the stage; but when the enraged voice of John the Baptist came from the dungeon calling Salome the daughter of an adulteress, the mother got up and left the theatre in trembling indignation!

The new Shanghai Art Theatre may sound insignificant to Occidentals with any knowledge of the modern social theatre. But in China it is an achievement of no little significance. Until very recently no respectable woman could appear on the Chinese stage, and actors were among the four despised social groups. But today modern educated women are slowly adopting the stage as a profession, and actors in Shanghai have organized into a trade union to raise their social position and protect their profession. Old prejudices about such things are being broken down in the cities, but despite the new theatre the old traditional theatres

CHINESE OCTOBER

Burns in the Sky

by A. B. Magil

"... in China a native Soviet power has already been established over regions with a total population of 70,000,000."—Speech of A. Losovsky, secretary of the Red International of Labor Unions, at the Moscow conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, as reported by Walter Duranty, New York Times, June 7, 1930.

When Chiang Kai-shek sold out to the imperialists in twenty-seven

and the Wuhan "Left" Kuomintang followed suit they said you were done for, yellow brother, the Reds are crushed HOORAY for Unification.

HOORAY for the Shanghai bankers.

HOORAY for Chiang Kai-shek, strong man of China and (incidentally) tool of the

U. S. A.

But on December 12, '27, you arose in Canton, yellow brother, you—"the armed people"—and your living will, the Canton Soviet. For three days you held out.

The blood of Canton's workers ran in Red flags over the streets. Li Fu-ling slaughtered you and Chang Fa-kwei, U. S. gunboats slaughtered you and imperialist troops trained to bear the white man's burden and shoot the guts out of the yellow bastards HOORAY for ...

* * *

37,000,000 Chinese are starving.

In Shanghai cotton mills six-year-old kids work 12 hours a day for 10 cents (one dime) in U. S. coin.

"... from the summer of 1927 up to the spring of 1929 ... more than half a million Chinese workers and peasants, including women and children, were executed by the Nanking regime."*

What price starvation, yellow brother?

What price the 16-hour day?

What price misery and oppression and filth and disease?

What price death?

What price, what price, imperialist masters?

* * *

The Chinese October burns in the sky.

They thought you were done for, yellow brother, they thought they were sitting pretty.

But over twelve provinces the Red Armies march
DOWN WITH THE LANDLORDS AND CAPITALISTS

Starving peasants and workers uniformed in rags armored with hunger, weaponed with a thousand years' bitterness Over Kwangsi, Hunan, Kiangsi, Anhwei the Red battalions sweep LAND TO THE PEASANTS

They stand at the gates of the cities
RICE AND MEAT TO THE WORKERS

The Canton Soviet lives!

DEATH TO THE MILITARISTS

Once again as in Russia's 1917 the cry:

ALL POWER TO THE SOVIETS

Splits earth and sky,

*R. Doonping: *Militarist Wars and Revolution in China*, p. 16.

are jammed each night with men and women of every class. Men still impersonate women, using the falsetto voice, and the four most famous actors of China are women impersonators. As an abstract art, and as a study of feudalism, the old theatre is fascinatingly interesting; but as a social institution it is a reactionary force. The plays they give, based chiefly on ancient history, cultivate and preserve the feudal virtues of filial piety, personal loyalty, the subservience of servant to master, of subject to sovereign, of wife to husband. The general plot, in which good men always succeed and bad men always fail, is a powerful weapon in the hands of rulers who successfully establish themselves over the



William Gropper

TEXTILE WORKERS MEETING IN THE WOODS—NORTH CAROLINA.

runs like a torrent over the parched land,
binds starveling hand to starveling hand, stains
the very roots of life with the red
of the Chinese October flaming high.

* * *

Yellow brother, the blood of the massacred running in Red flags over China's earth

blossoms in steel—a harvest of shining bayonets.

The iron tides of Revolution sweep on, pull
DOWN WITH IMPERIALISM
earth into flood, tear all your yesterdays up like stinking weeds,
drag

down the temples and the prisons and the hovels, build
new bright days into the sun. There is nothing
LONG LIVE THE CHINESE REVOLUTION
can stop you. Your stride is Power, your brain is Steel, your
heart is

400,000,000 workers and peasants toiling in factory and field.
And over India, Japan, Africa, Europe, America, in dark mines
and hellish factories, in black slums and shriveled huts
there falls the shadow of that stride
and our earth too is shaken, yellow brother.

people.

The modern theatre, with its realism, its revolutionary introduction of tragedy, its new social virtues, and its use of the natural voice and gestures, seems as a hard, cold, primitive and colorless world to most Chinese. But despite this, the Shanghai Art Theatre is trying to strike firm roots, and it hopes to eventually have a theatre of its own where it can experiment with foreign and Chinese social dramas. Having nothing to lose, but possessing instead a flaming spirit, a revolutionary conviction, it is perhaps able to succeed where others have failed.

Shanghai, China.



William Gropper

TEXTILE WORKERS MEETING IN THE WOODS—NORTH CAROLINA.

Listen to Your Mother!

By H. T. Tsiang

(A Letter From China)

Dear Sheng-Chin-Yeu:

I accused you of being emotional, sentimental and impatient. I think I am even worse sometimes. I don't know how to speak to you myself. So I am going to awaken your mother from her grave and let her talk to you.

When she speaks to you, you must forget all about American prosperity, about your college environment and the noisy conversations of your fellow Nationalists. You must visualize yourself in China, standing by your mother's bedside. Now listen:

My dear son: Since I have died, I have not seen you, and I do not know what to tell you. Tears spring from my eyes at the sight of you. When I was born, my parents thought they had too many children. They put me into a bamboo basket and left me on the highway. Ants came to bite me, the sun scorched me and I cried and cried. The noise attracted the dogs. They licked my face with their tongues. Because I was so young and had not very much flesh the dogs ran away. A farmer passed by and brought me home and kept me.

While I yet was young they enslaved me. Because I was a girl born as if from the oak tree without father and mother, they could do anything to me and I had nobody to complain to. When I was about eighteen years of age, the farmer and his wife wanted me to marry their son, whom I had often quarreled with and hated. I was a slave and I had no right to say no. So I married him. One year later, the boy died and I was the one whom they blamed, because a blind fortune-teller had said that I brought bad luck. Then they decided to get rid of me.

I knew your father and liked him. I thought it was bad to let them sell me and marry me off to anybody who could offer a better price. I decided to marry your father. He could not pay very much. But I struggled so hard, and at last I succeeded. This was a free marriage and we got along very well.

Then you came to this world. Because you came a little bit too early your grandmother and grandfather thought I was no good, and despised me. Yet I gave them their first grandson, they liked you and felt happy anyway.

Two years later your first sister came. Your grandmother was not as happy as the first time and two years later another child was born. It was a girl again. We had two girls in the family. It was too many. Five days later, your father brought in a stranger and he took your second sister from my arms. I saw that stranger put your little sister into a basket which he brought along. I cried. You cried. Even your father shed tears. Your father gave you an orange and asked you to let that stranger go on his way. You threw the orange at the stranger. When he ran away with your little sister, you ran after him. But your legs were too short and you could not overtake him. You cried the whole day. From then on you kept on asking me when sister will come back. I lied to you and told you that she will come back very soon. I don't know where she is, whether she is still alive, whether she has been eaten up by wild, hungry dogs.

Your father worked in a rice shop. Every day he had to do heavy work, but his body was not strong enough for that heavy load. And soon his lungs were affected and he spat blood. But you and your sister grew bigger and bigger. You needed more food than before. Your father earned less and sometimes nothing. Then I had to go to other people's houses and make children's clothes and men's shoes.

I worked so hard that your brother was born dead. Better so. I had no baby of my own, so I could nurse the baby of some other rich family. But when I nursed the rich man's baby, it made me think of my own. I cried to myself when nobody was near me and I became sick.

Then your father died. You were nine years old and your sister was seven. I worked by day. I worked by night. By day I worked in rich men's houses. By night I brought home unfinished pieces to make some additional money.

When your father was alive he sent you to school. But how could I continue to pay the tuition fee? I begged the principal of

the village grammar school to give you a scholarship. Fortunately my request was granted. That is how it was possible for you to finish your grammar school.

When I was sick I lay on my bed. I could see nothing. There was no food. I sent your sister to our relatives to work although she was still a child. Neighbors sent me bits to eat. I was sick and could not eat very much, I shared the rice with you. Again I was very happy to see you grow bigger even while I lie in bed. Sometimes I felt hungry too. But I knew I would not live much longer so what was the difference to me. You were growing and you needed the food more.

One afternoon I felt that I could struggle no longer and the end was near. I called you to my bedside and told you: "I leave you nothing. I have been a widow for years and I have a good reputation. I leave you nothing. But I have taken good care of you, and have always taken food out of my bowl to feed you. So now you have a strong body; and you know how to read and write. I want nothing from you. But I want you to remember that I was born a poor girl and that as a widow I brought you up. A poor working widow! Now I see you in America, doing wonderful work for the rich and helping them attack the poor who are like me—the working people. You are indeed my faithful son!"

Now I will speak, dearest. Five years ago when we met in Nanking, we talked about our families. When you told me what had happened to you in your boyhood and what your mother had said to you, I listened with tears. And now as I write I am in tears. Read what your mother has said. I hope her words will move you more than my own.

Nanking, China.

CHIE-KU-NIANG.

IN CONCLUSION

You will give praise to all things.

Idly in the morning, bluntly at noon, cunningly with the evening cigar, you will meditate further praise.

So will the days pass, each profitable and serene. So will your sleep be undisturbed. So you will live.

No faith will be difficult, rising from doubt. No love will be false, born of dread.

In the flaring parks, in the speakeasies, in the hushed academies, your murmur will applaud the wisdom of a thousand quacks. For theirs is the kingdom.

By your sedate nod, in the quiet office, you will grieve with the magnate as he speaks of sacrifice. For his is the power.

Your knowing glance will affirm the shrewd virtue of clown and drudge. Director's-room or street-corner, the routine killer will know your candid smile. Your handclasp, after the speeches at the club, will endorse the valor of loud suburban heroes. For theirs is the glory, forever and ever...

Always, more than wise, you will be with the many against the few.

But you will be a brother, on second thought, to all men.

The metropolitan dive, jammed with your colleagues, the dervishes; the skyscraper, built by your twin, the pimp of gum-drops and philanthropy; the auditoriums, packed with weeping creditors, your peers; the morgues, tenanted by your friends, the free dead; the asylums, crowded with your cousins, the mad; the prisons, jammed with your brothers, the venomous doomed—upon all of them you will find means to bestow praise.

And as you know that all of this will be,

*As you walk among millions, indifferent to them,
Or stop and read the journals filled with manufactured bliss,
Or pause and hear, with no concern, the statesman vending
public alarm,*

You will be grateful for an easy death,

Your silence will praise them for killing you.

—KENNETH FEARING.

THE COCKEYED WORLD WORDS AND MUSIC

BY

GROPPER & GREGORY INC.

MAKERS OF HIGH GRADE DITTIES

JOSEPH KALAR

UNEMPLOYED ANTHOLOGY

1.

I stand on a streetcorner staring at a cigaret glowing between my fingers, my mind nibbling on an idea much as the small teeth of mice nibble a piece of cheese. It is this: I have saved so much money, and with careful attention, it will last me so many months. I compute carefully. I have so many brothers, a sister, and a mother. They must eat and I have no job. The windows of the sawmill are dull grey sheets; the tall black smokestacks haven't belched smoke for many days. The papermill lounges vacantly by the river, a brick mortuary of dead hours and minutes and time-clocks. The streets are dotted with forlorn men from whose faces much laughter has flown. Bitterness and fear walk arm in arm with men. What shall we do? What is the world coming to? Today we still have food. But what of tomorrow?

2.

He is an old man who was the first to go when they began to lay off men. He worked for the same company for fifteen years and in all that time he hasn't lost over six months. Now he is without work and spends his time rubbing shoulders with strong husky young men who pound the sidewalks with him, looking for work. He knows he will not find it. An old man has but a poor chance when there are hundreds of young men hungry and eager for jobs, who will take anything, who will do anything. Now he walks around the streets, or lies in the grass blinking at the sun, or goes to the dock and sits on a bench staring at the oily dark river flowing toward the dam that needs so little water these lean days. It is practically his first vacation, his first chance to blink at the sun and feel the kindly warmth of it steal up his thighs. He isn't happy. A dull perplexed look films his eyes and his forehead is puckered with worry. "I see by the papers", he says, "that there ain't going to be many old people left anymore. What do you think? Think there's going to be many old people living this year?"

3.

I met him in a poolhall sitting with the rest of the boys on the mourners' bench. He was well oiled and couldn't stand anymore. His face was that of one who drinks excessively. His red hair was tousled and his face was dirty. I sat beside him and said, "Jesus, but times are tough!" "Tough?", he looked at me and laughed. "Hell, times aint tough. Why just last month I had a swell offer from the Heinz people, but I turned it down because



Brown's up for congress, - jobs for bankheps-hurray!
While Coolidge is writing a column a day
who says there's an end to our prosperity
For Dad and his brothers and four million others
have a fine place to sleep in the park.

NEW MASSES

SEPTEMBER, 1930



The farmers are happy with nothing to eat
For Wall Street is making new fortunes in wheat
who says there's an end to our prosperity
For Dad and his brothers and four million others
have a fine place to sleep in the park.



Andy Mellon and Scarface are careless and gay
What Nation has gangsters as happy as they
who says there's an end to our prosperity
For Dad and his brothers and four million others
have a fine place to sleep in the park.



The South has no problems - let freedom prevail
while Negroes are lynched and the workers in jail
who says there's an end to our prosperity
For Dad and his brothers and four million others
have a fine place to sleep in the park.



There're sailors in China who fight on salt pork
To keep the Red Army from storming New York
who says there's an end to our prosperity
For Dad and his brothers and four million others
have a fine place to sleep in the park.

Notes from
Minnesota

I expect a better offer any time now. Sure, they offered me a job on the drive." "Drive?", I asked, "Hell, the Heinz people ain't in no lumbering business. They make pickles and catsup and rice flakes. What do you mean, drive?" "Didn't you hear about the drive?" he asked. "Where've you been? They offered me a job driving pickles down the Vinegar River, that's what they did." He laughed and I laughed with him, for it was funny. But he's just a type. Someday we'll hitch up our pants, spit on our hands, and dig into the big job of cleaning this fine land of ours of all its fat lice and bedbugs. But drunkards won't do it.

4

Another type: a machinist with a steady job. Naturally, he isn't worried, but since all of the people talk about hard times, he has been infected too and has his own theories. He is one of those jackasses who can see no further than his nose and convinced that hard times depend on whether or not a Democrat or Republican is in office. "Let me tell you", he says, "the people are waking up. They won't stand it much longer. I bet you any money that our next president will be a democrat. The people are fed up with Hoover. I bet good old Al Smith is laughing up his sleeve right now." Well, I thought, let "good old Al Smith" laugh up his sleeve if he wants to. Or if he wants to, he can cry. That won't buy me a job. That won't take the fear out of the hearts of men, or put laughter back into eyes grown dull, or bring back smiles to lips pressed together in a thin line of worry.

5.

Hendrickson was a lumberjack, and he was broke. I am sure of that because he borrowed a dollar from a friend to pay for his room. But that came out later. The fact is that times are tough for lumberjacks, with most of the camps down, and only gypsies being hired. Hendrickson borrowed the dollar and rented a room in a hotel patronized by lumberjacks. What went through his mind then, I don't know, of course, but I have a hunch which I am keeping to myself. He stood before a mirror, looking at himself, probably grinning a bit. In his hand he held a razor. With a quick motion of his hand he cut his throat from ear to ear. After that it appears he continued to look at himself, bleeding. He walked around the room two or three times and finally toppled on the bed. These details, of course, are assumed, but the mute evidence consisting in trails of blood leading from the mirror around

the room, speaks well for the soundness of the assumption. The next morning the landlord, coming to the room to tidy it up and open the window, found Hendrickson. The newspapers, of course, call it a "rash" act, which maybe it was. Further, they tell everybody interested enough, Hendrickson will be buried at the county's expense, he having no relatives and no money. One way to settle the unemployment problem!

6.

He thinks of war and his face lights up. To him war is a magic ointment to be applied to the ailing rheumatic body of capitalism. "What we need," he says, "is another war. Then we'd have good times." The poor fish! he is 28 years old, in sound physical condition, and would be one of the first to be drafted.

7.

Revolution, "war between the rich class and the poor class", is an idea that sprouts like corn in fertile freshly plowed soil. The idea is immature, confused, bewildered, bungling, but still it is an idea. Men talk of it as though it were inevitable. The talk is low and the intensity with which it is spoken varies. Some of the men talk viciously and blasphemously. Others quietly. Still others speak of it as though they were but bystanders or members of an audience watching a tragedy. But we all talk. We all pound our heels on the pavements and keep shuffling around feeling the fear perched like a crow in our hearts, pecking at our minds, nibbling away our happiness and pride bit by bit, much like the small teeth of a mouse nibbling on a piece of cheese.



New Masses: The photograph is a scene from the play *A Rebellion at Mt. Tsukuba*, by the Communist playwright Saburo Ochiai, produced by the Shin-Tsukiji Theatre, the only radical theatre now active in Japan. The scene presented is a conference of an underworld group of counter-revolutionaries including three Geisha girls, gangsters (Japanese "Sochi") and a spy. The play was a great success. The Shin-Tsukiji Theatre was established in May, 1929 and during its first year produced about 20 plays including: *Roar China!* by S. Teriakov; *Mother* by Gorky; *The Armoured Train* by Ivanov; *All Quiet On The Western Front* by Remarque; *The Uprising* by Sekichi-Fujimori; *There Is No Limit* by Tomoyoshi-Murayama and others. The theatre has two directors and 15 actors and actresses, including Miss Yasue-Yamamoto, one of the ablest players in Japan. I am on the theatre's staff of translators and we are now interested in the production of the American plays *Hoboken Blues*, and *Fiesta* by Michael Gold, *Airways* by John Dos Passos and others produced by the New Playwrights Theatre.—

Sincerely,

—RYOCHI NAKAGAWA

Tokyo, Japan.

MOVIES

By SAMUEL BRODY

Holiday, a Pathé Production, Shown at the Cameo Theatre, New York.

The tables are turned. There was a time when Hollywood served as a source of artistic initiative and study for the Russian directors. Today the Soviet Union is the only country that bears high the best traditions of the American movie which it is ever enriching thru its own experiences and on an independent non-commercial basis. Today the Pudovkins, Turins, Vertoffs and Eisensteins can look upon films like *Holiday* and justifiably scoff at the incompetence and backwardness of American filmdom.

Holiday is a supreme effort of cinema to become as much the theatre as possible. It is more competent theatre than even Mamoulian's *Applause*, which definitely eliminated the use of intervals thru the moving camera. This means that the visual continuity of the stage is grafted on to the camera. In *Holiday* this is accomplished with remarkable competence. The close-up thereby loses its significance as a unit of montage, as "a word in a sentence." The fade, the role of which as a determinant of rhythm is highly important in a film, is used to simply imitate the curtain-drop on the stage. The interpretation is in the best tradition of the orthodox *drame de salon*, with all its fineries and anachronous art.

The modern cinema laboring hard to give birth to a reincarnated theatre which we thought long dead and forgotten. For shame!

Holiday. A theme to gladden the heart of every emancipated and "modern" American bourgeois. You see, it is bad to waste all your life money-seeking. The stubborn old financier who gets no fun out of life and is constantly preoccupied with ABC-preferred and gilt-edge securities. Linda, the emancipated daughter who envies the poor because "they, at least, have something to look forward to—they want to be like us." Poor little rich folks, bound hand and foot by Mammon. Johnny Case, the boy who wants only a paltry twenty-thousand dollars to take a long *holiday* and to do as he pleases—and who practically has his way, in the end.

Somebody ought to post a \$5,000 reward for the capture, dead or alive, of the guy who, writing in a well-known labor daily in New York, said: "It is one of the best films of the year and those who have in the past scoffed at the talking pictures will now have to admit that cinema producers can turn out masterpieces."

Oh yeah?

The Law of The Siberian Taiga, A Kinosibir Production, U.S.S.R. Shown at the Cameo Theatre, New York.

Those backward Russians! Still turning out silent films nearly five years after "we" have "revolutionized," "rejuvenated," "remade" the art of cinema. While we have wired from top to bottom and have gone "all talking-all sounding-all-everything!"

In fact, Russian pictures are scarcer than ever nowadays. Even the ritzy "little" theatres don't show them as often as they did about a year ago. Which makes a film like *The Law of the Siberian Taiga* all the more refreshing in this desert of noisy box-office celluloid.

It is by no means a great film. It is too much a "story" picture, and not a very gripping one at that. The documentary nature of the film might have fared better with a straighter theme.

On the other hand its ethnographic and political implications are beyond criticism, while some very original mounting make it a film which holds you thruout its length. There is something which defies words of description in these Soviet films dealing with the formerly oppressed national minorities and the new relationships created by the Revolution. They are the epics of the rise of unknown peoples. They are immortal documents of Communism's struggle to restore backward and downtrodden sections of mankind. And what material for directors, cameramen, etc.

The Tungus tribes which figure in this film are the most photogenic actors in the world. In fact, they are the greatest actors you have ever seen. That is, if you still think of the movies in terms of actors—"stars." In the Soviet Union they don't, and that accounts for pictures like *The Law of The Siberian Taiga*.

Russian films rarely get around to the cheaper neighborhood houses where workers might see them. They remain condemned to the exclusive "art cinemas".

In Europe successful workers film societies are organized for the showing of pictures of special interest to workers. Can't we do something like it here?

Raffles, a United Artists Production Shown at the Rialto Theatre, New York.

Can't we put the Fish Committee on the job? Everytime I think of the picture I see red.

It's all papier machè from the sets to the dramatis personae, and it's high time that something be done about these things.



New Masses: The photograph is a scene from the play *A Rebellion at Mt. Tsukuba*, by the Communist playwright Saburo Ochiai, produced by the Shin-Tsukiji Theatre, the only radical theatre now active in Japan. The scene presented is a conference of an underworld group of counter-revolutionaries including three Geisha girls, gangsters (Japanese "Sochi") and a spy. The play was a great success. The Shin-Tsukiji Theatre was established in May, 1929 and during its first year produced about 20 plays including: *Roar China!* by S. Teriakov; *Mother* by Gorky; *The Armoured Train* by Ivanov; *All Quiet On The Western Front* by Remarque; *The Uprising* by Sekichi-Fujimori; *There Is No Limit* by Tomoyoshi-Murayama and others. The theatre has two directors and 15 actors and actresses, including Miss Yasue-Yamamoto, one of the ablest players in Japan. I am on the theatre's staff of translators and we are now interested in the production of the American plays *Hoboken Blues*, and *Fiesta* by Michael Gold, *Airways* by John Dos Passos and others produced by the New Playwrights Theatre.—

Sincerely,
—RYOCHI NAKAGAWA

Tokyo, Japan.

BOOKS

**Robert Evans
Ruth Burns
Edward Newhouse
A. B. Magil**

REVIEWED BY:
**Charles Yale Harrison
E. Merrill Root
Ed. Falkowski**

**Bennett Stevens
Walter Snow
Harry Alan Potamkin
Samuel Brody**

Memories of Lenin, by Nadezhda K. Krupskaya. Translated by Eric Verney. International Publishers. \$1.50.

The central fact in the historic epoch in which we are living is the worldwide struggle of the workers and farmers against capitalism. Every country from the United States to Java has its Communist Party, with numerous allied organizations, acting as the leader of revolutionary movements. Already one-sixth of the world's surface is a union of socialist soviet republics, steadily pushing forward toward communism, influencing masses of people everywhere: a stern irrevocable fact justly alarming the capitalist powers.

While no single individual "makes" history, it cannot be denied that Lenin was the giant revolutionary leader of our times. By this time even bourgeois pedagogues and journalists recognize him as the preeminent "statesman" of the twentieth century. His revolutionary logic permeates the Soviet Union today, infuses strength into revolutionary movements in other countries, challenges a dying capitalist culture. In glancing over the history of the October revolution it is astonishing to note what a perfect instrument he was of the revolutionary will of the masses, how sensitive he was to the semi-conscious desires and aims of the workers and peasants, with what a superb intellect and iron will he kept men of lesser calibre in line, in some cases raising them to heights of thought and action of which, by themselves, they were intrinsically incapable.

Despite the deluge of biographies in the English language which we have had in recent years, about every conceivable type of figure, past and present, great and small, it is significant that with the exception of Valery Marcu's lyrical "human interest" story of Lenin's life and a brief, partial sketch by Trotsky, we have no biography of the most significant figure of our times. This is partly due to the peculiar stupidities and prejudices of commercial publishing which would find no "market" for a fuller biography of Lenin, and partly to the fact a definitive biography of the great revolutionary leader still remains to be written. To write a life of Lenin means to write a history of the Communist Party, so indissolubly bound up was Lenin's life with the revolutionary movement. That time will eventually come; meantime we must content ourselves with memoirs and sketches, disconnected reports shedding light on this or that aspect of Lenin's personality and activities.

Krupskaya's book, which does not pretend to be anything more than a series of such brief sketches, has special interest because it was written by a woman who was not merely Lenin's wife, but his comrade and co-worker, a Bolshevik in her own right. These sketches begin with 1893 in St. Petersburg and cover Lenin's life in Siberian exile, in Munich, in London, and through the 1905 revolution up to 1907. Yet even in these snapshots Lenin's essential character—and the character of the workers and peasants revolution—stands out clearly. One striking characteristic of these memoirs is their modesty. Lenin was a man utterly without vanity; he never posed as a "great man"; and this aspect of his nature has so permeated his companion's writings that we are struck by the simplicity as well as the power of the man. Though it would be more proper for Krupskaya to write with personal enthusiasm about Lenin than it is for Trotsky, for example, to write about himself, these sketches are completely devoid of anything like showing off. We do not hear what a bright boy Lenin

was at school or how much cleverer he was than anybody else. The narrative is sober, almost impersonal, infused with Lenin's own identification with the revolutionary cause.

Serge Eisenstein, speaking here recently about the differences between the American and the Soviet film, said that the trouble with Hollywood pictures is that they place the "lady and gentleman in the foreground and the French Revolution, for instance, in the background." Trotsky's autobiography somehow manages to convey the impression that the October Revolution was an event which providentially came along to show off the author's brilliance. Since Trotsky's autobiography is the only personal document about the Russian revolution which has so far been widely circulated in English, it is important, for the sake of truth, to read Krupskaya's memoirs of Lenin to get another side of the picture. Because of Lenin's complete identification with the revolutionary cause we see not a prima donna against a highly interesting background, doing "extraordinary" things, but a man to whom the revolution was life itself, for whom no task was too "small," no devoted worker too insignificant. In this respect the chapter on life in London is especially instructive. Here we get, without the malice and injustice which marked Trotsky's book, revealing sketches of other revolutionary leaders. We see the brilliant aloofness of Plekhanov alienating workers, one of the reasons why the Mensheviks failed and the Bolsheviks succeeded in understanding the course of revolutionary events. Krupskaya makes no attempt to picture Lenin as the one and only revolutionist. He does not move, as does Trotsky, full of brilliance and contempt, above a vague undefined mass of knaves and fools. We get a healthy correction of the picture hitherto most prevalent in English: we see a host of little-known, devoted, able revolutionists working with Lenin whose sweat and blood contributed to the victory of October. Trotsky himself is depicted without bile; his brilliance admitted, his defects revealed through his own actions. If, after all, Lenin does emerge head and shoulders above the colleagues it is not because Krupskaya says so but because the facts speak for themselves. While Plekhanov and Axelrod and other Mensheviks, clever and futile literary men, play with such pretty conceits as that "under the new state of society there won't be any fights at all, only deadly boredom," Lenin, hard at work on his pamphlet *What is to be Done*, plans organization of the revolutionary movement. "A Social Democrat," he writes, describing the type of revolutionary who today would be called a Communist, "must not be afraid of long work. He must work and work without leaving off. He must be ever ready to do anything, whether it be to save the honor, prestige and pre-eminence of the party at the time of the greatest revolutionary 'depression,' or whether it be to prepare, plan and carry out a nationwide armed rising."

While Krupskaya's notes deal chiefly with Lenin's political activities, because they were the essential man, we get interesting sidelights on some of Lenin's personal traits. These destroy the legend of the heartless, mechanical engineer built up by bourgeois writers ten years ago. H. G. Wells' vulgar picture, for instance, of the "little man" who doesn't care for flowers. We see instead a thoroughly healthy man, full of red blood, high spirits, and laughter; a man passionately fond of hunting and children; especially fond of knowledge, reading avidly not only on politics and economics, but again and again re-reading Turgenev, Tol-

stoy and Chernyshevsky, loving Pushkin and Nekrassov, going to Paris workers' cafes to hear revolutionary satirical songs, himself often joining in singing. He even kept pictures of Zola and Hertzen and Chernyshevsky in his album alongside those of old political exiles. These little matters are interesting not because they show that Lenin was, after all, "human" or a "real guy," but because they revealed how broad the man's concept of culture was. Yet, though "nothing human was alien to him," he approached everything as a revolutionist. He would not read the poems of Fet because they were feudal, not worth wasting time over; he gave up amusements like chess and skating because he was so fond of them that they interfered with his real work. Everything he did, whether working out a plan for smuggling letters out of jail or a plan for an armed uprising, was subordinated to the central aim of overthrowing capitalism and laying the foundations of socialism. Always he was animated by a "profound faith in the class instinct of the proletariat, in its creative forces, in its historic mission." With this faith all his logic and will were concentrated on creating an energetic class party which today leads the Russian people toward communism and inspires the workers of other countries in the worldwide struggle for the creation of a new classless society.

ROBERT EVANS.

Viewing with Alarm

Our Business Civilization, by James Truslow Adams. Albert and Charles Boni. \$3.00.

Although it is but a collection of sporadic essays and does by no means claim to be a systematic interpretation, this book represents a definite trend in contemporary thought. It is the voice of a group of men whose function it is "to view with alarm" or to be "appalled" at the situation; it is the protest of the petty bourgeoisie against the swift depreciation of its values.

Mr. Adams, would like to supplant our "economic" civilization with a "humanist" one. That's the one we really ought to have. In this humanist civilization everybody would be a gentleman, a scholar, and a judge of good wine. They would lead what Stuart Chase calls the good life. They would do away with standardization, with conformity, with "keeping up with the Joneses". A man would "think out what sort of life he really wants, what life he is going to try to make himself". In our own terms, the author wants to supplant an ideology based on the economic alignments of a period with a lot of individual ideologies made to order by the individuals themselves irrespective of class alignments. Which is not the way things run in this pie-eyed world, if Mr. Adams can recall the preface to *Critique of Political Economy*.

Among other things, the book is characterized by that *nationnewrepublicleagueforindustrialdemocracy* attitude of "ought to" and "should". Mr. Adams deplores the efforts of the manufacturers "to get people to fill up their leisure with *things, things* that can be made and sold." Sure. We think that's a damn shame, too. But we don't go around deplored it, we know that you can't change the situation so long as you don't do away with the "manufacturers" entirely. Fundamentals is what Mr. Adams and his fellow liberals stumble over.

It hardly seems possible that at this date, one who has made history his life study should speak of a classless art, of "art" as an abstraction. Yet read—"For one thing, the prime factor in business life, the need for making a profit, is at war with the spirit of all the arts and with what should be the spirit of the professions." Now that isn't a very carefully made statement, is it? After all, the *Saturday Evening Post* is also art, the dominant art of the period, and as such it is not at all "at war" with "the prime factor in business life."

But the book is not without value. Lots of informative observa-



Virna Haffer.

HOKUM HEROES: *The Flagpole Sitter*

tion and the chapters on "Our Lawless Heritage" and "Hoover and Law Observance" are really well done. I suppose when I, like Mr. Adams, will have to have two armed guards accompany me while the bags containing my securities are carried to a trust company, I, too, will "always vote Republican" and cultivate continental elegance and refined aloofness.

EDWARD NEWHOUSE.

An Erring Spirit

Byron, by Andre Maurois, translated by Hamish Miles. Appleton. \$5.00.

Out of the dimmed past of Victorian England and from behind a myriad of petticoats that have long ceased to swirl, the tempestuous figure of George Gordon, Lord Byron, emerges once again. This time it is the biographer of Shelley and Disraeli, M. Maurois, who depicts the insolent genius who flung his poetry at a country which was steeped in the religiosity of Wordsworth and had made the redoubtable Southey its Poet Laureate.

That M. Maurois refrains from pulling a dead lion by the beard and brings to "this erring spirit" a comprehensive sympathy, there can be little doubt. That he sometimes verges upon historical fiction is, however, sadly apparent. An eddying brain and a tumult of emotions are not easily caught on paper a hundred years after

the feverish body which housed them has ceased to quicken, and M. Maurois has planted through the 560 pages of his book many beautiful, insidious phrases from which spring many doubts. How, for instance, does M. Maurois know that to the mature Byron (pp. 238-9) a note from a love of his adolescence, Mary Chaworth, "conjured up all the enchanted regrets of old times." It seems more typical of the man who threw off mistresses as other men discard their soiled underclothes that in 1813 the woman who for him was the "Morning Star of Annesley," was, a decade later, dimmer than Orion on a cloudy night.

M. Maurois has turned a searchlight on the countless facets of my Lord Byron who was to Lady Melbourne a cynic and to Lady Blessington a sentimentalist; the man who so admired the conventional virtues that he wed a paragon, Annabella Milbanke, and took to bed with him his half-sister, Augusta Leigh. And M. Maurois has skilfully woven into the warp of the MS the many anecdotes of the lord who challenged Victorian conservatism to his last breath. However, he makes little attempt to give a critical analysis of the work of the poet. He quotes it merely as a reflection of the character of the lame gentleman, and this is not enough.

The satire *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* is referred to only in passing. The bitter *Ode to the Farmers of the Frame Bill* which was written after Byron's espousal of the workers' cause in the House of Lords is not mentioned. Nor does the *Curse of Minerva*, that scathing denunciation of British foreign policy, fare better. And what of the poem *To the Irish Avatar* (George IV) and the elegy on George III, *The Vision of Judgment* which Byron's publisher John Murray was afraid to print because of its indictment of royalty! These and many other poems, such as *The Age of Bronze* which impales Metternich and Wellington in its sharp lines, cannot be ignored. They are also the output of him who wrote *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan*. The political career of a genius is certainly no less interesting than his career as a pale bedfellow.

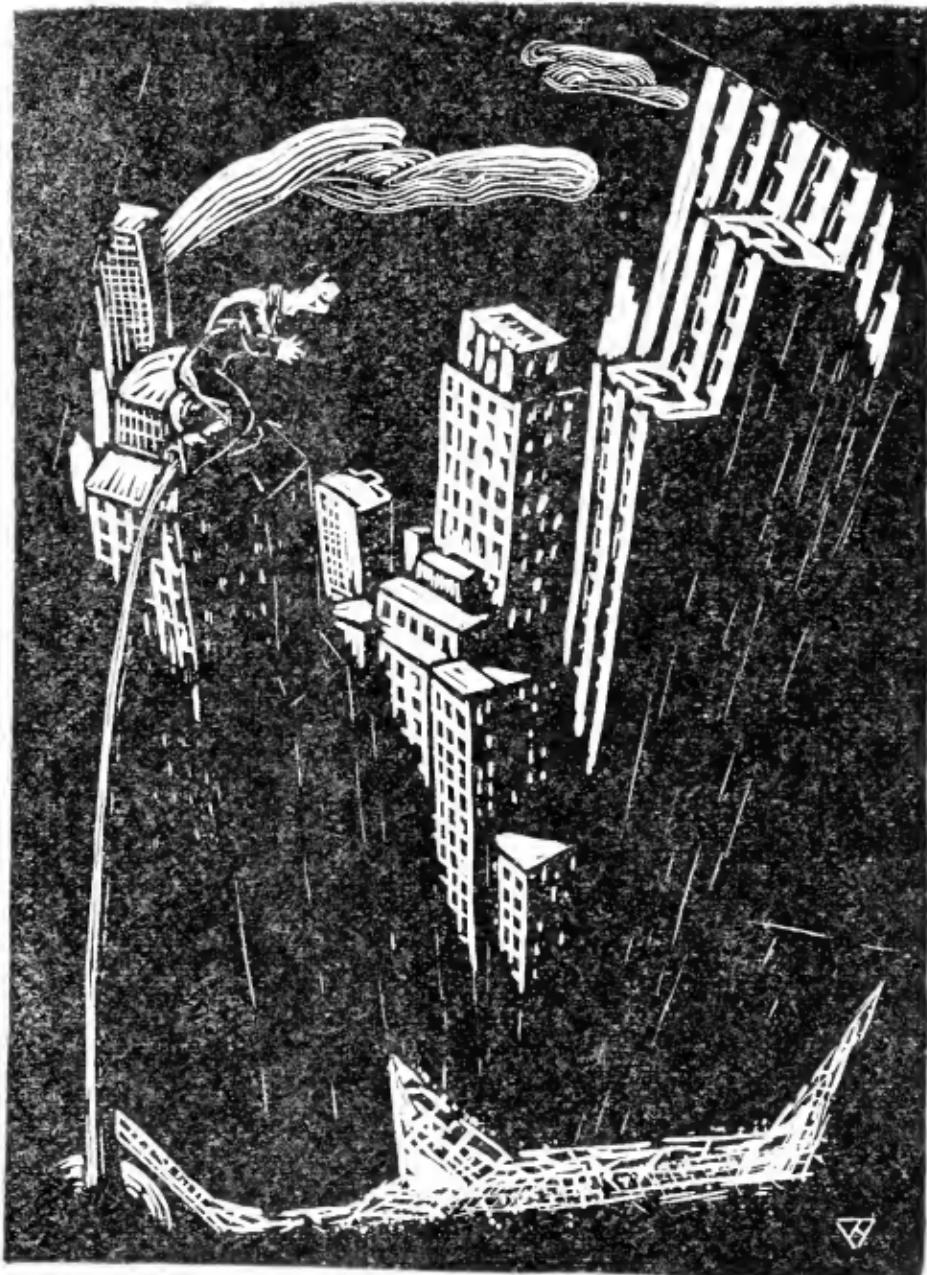
Byron lived as the Industrial Revolution was beginning to clutch England in its iron talons. He died helping to undermine the "doctrine of legitimacy" and the Holy Alliance in the Greek War of Independence. He sympathized with the frame breakers, recognized that their way was not the way out, but knew no other. His poetry was a threat to kings and a jest at generals. Although he tramped the middle ground of the Whig Party, although his emotions played havoc with his politics, so long as there is protest against oppression the name Byron will be remembered.

RUTH BURNS.



Virna Haffer.

HOKUM HEROES: The Flagpole Sitter



Virna Haffer.

HOKUM HEROES: The Flagpole Sitter

Men Behind the Guns

War for Profits. By Otto Lehmann-Russbäldt. Translated by Pierre Loving. Alfred H. King. \$1.75.

The jacket on this book asks the following questions:

"Do you know that Alfred Krupp was an officer in the French Legion of Honor? That Alfred Nobel, the founder of the Nobel Peace prize, made his fortune in dynamite (the old rogue knew that peace could never come through peace prizes, C.Y.H.); that in the Gallipoli campaign the English were killed by guns which had been delivered into Turkish hands by Vickers, Ltd.? That German iron and steel companies exported basic metal to France via Holland and Switzerland during the late war? That the Hamburg explosion was caused by illegally manufactured poison gas?"

After reading the jacket and opening the book you will find all these statements proved—and many more. This is a short book but it is packed with heavy ammunition against the war-makers.

War for Profits is a remarkable expose of the international cartel of armament manufacturers. It tells with the aid of amazing documents the interlocking relationship of Krupp, Schneider, Skoda, Vickers and that conglomerate personality, Sir Basil Zaharoff.

The author, Dr. Lehmann-Russbäldt, was a medical officer during the war and is a German Social Democrat. He believes that armaments can be abolished by legislation. (There are people who still believe in Santa Claus). But don't let that deter you: read the book, it is full of worthwhile facts.

—CHARLES YALE HARRISON.

A Sophisticated Yawn

The Obelisk, by William Rollins, Jr. Brewer and Warren. \$2.50.

Sick Saints used to confess how sinful they were; and sick moderns, who scorn both the Saint and the sin, carry on the tradition. Like tenth-rate John Bunyans, without any of Bunyan's great-hearted courage and vision, they romanticize their little penny-in-the-slot peccadilloes, their sick drifting moods, their dull despairs and tawdry doubts. And so we get such a picture as this of a useless youth who wants to wander the roads of the world, "afloat and light-hearted," but who hasn't the guts even to keep the girl he loves, and who settles down (in a ne-plus-ultra disillusionment) to make money and vote for Coolidge.

Incidentally, we get dull behaviouristic conversations in which smart inadequate men, a modern girl, Louise, who dabbles in what she supposes to be ideas, certain Harvard students who seem like inebriated chromos of immature George Jean Nathans, the poor helpless dismal "hero" and his caricature-of-a-hillbilly parent, flounder through solemn pseudo-discussions of sex, Tolstoi, education, god, love, drink, and communism, with the general adequacy of Swift's Yahoos discussing Plato's *Republic*.

The effect of the book is the same as if one saw a tenth-rate Boston vaudeville troupe giving a burlesque of *Antigone*.

How long will such cheap, smart, tinsel, dreary stuff as this be the fashion? As long as we are weak drifters who wish to rationalize our own defeat; who (because we have surrendered to money and "respectability") wish to impose the ideal of yawning "sophisticated" denial of all values upon our neighbors. The futile desire missionary propaganda for futility.

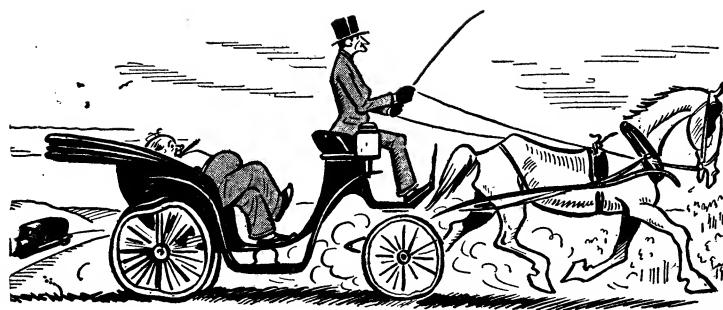
Part of this book was published and praised by the *American Caravan*; but of course, caravans naturally are at home amid the monotony and the sterility of the Sahara.

—E. MERRILL ROOT.

The American Family

The New Generation, Edited by V. F. Calverton and Samuel D. Schmalhausen. Macaulay Co. \$5.00.

The American family is the nucleus of propaganda for the perpetuation of existing values, the cornerstone of the established order. Through its agency, conservative attitudes are engendered toward private property and the state, irrational taboos in religion and sex sanctioned and national, race and class prejudices fostered. For this reason, a class controlled educational system glorifies ecstatically the love of home and mother and builds up fervent



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—PAXTON HIBBEN, *The Book League Monthly*.

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—NAT FERBER, *N. Y. American*.

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GENERALS DIE IN BED

BY CHARLES YALE HARRISON

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“A good deal of Charles Yale Harrison’s fascinating book about his war experiences was published in these pages. It is one swell book. It is different from the average war book in three important respects. (1) It is told from the private’s viewpoint. (2) It makes no attempt to manufacture literature out of the war. The facts are there, naked and brutal... (3) It does not hesitate to damn the generals and the bullybeef manufacturers and munition-makers and other profiteers. To this soldier distance lends no enchantment to the slaughter.”—JOSEPH FREEMAN.

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loyalties to parental ideas. The capitalist press recks with sentimentality on wife and mother themes. The Church utters shrill admonitions against those who would “destroy the sanctity of the home” and teaches youngsters to recite: “Thou shall’t not commit adultery”. Yet in spite of the combined frantic efforts of the schools the press and the religious bodies, the traditional family is disintegrating and parental authority diminishing. Economic changes demand changes in other social institutions and the nature of modern urban industrial society is inimical to the perpetuation of a family organization which had its inception in a simple rural setting. Older controls are snapping. The new generation resisting or disregarding parental authority are formulating new codes of morality.

The problems arising from this situation form the subject matter of some of the contributions to the symposium under review. There is no unity in method of treatment, in content or in underlying purpose in the volume; casual, fugitive impressionistic fragments are jumbled with careful anthropological and psychiatric essays. With few exceptions, the articles are written to appeal to upper middle class readers absorbed in their sex enigmas (See Watson’s definition of the home as “a place to have cocktails in before going out to dinner”).

There is much data of high scientific merit interspersed in its pages although the authors sometimes engage in hyperbolic distortions as in the case of the estimates of the prevalence of syphilis and of the frigidity of women. A consistent tone of enlightened frankness, free from conventional hypocrisy, pervades the entire work making it more than merely another attempt to exploit the demand for “sexey” books.

—BENNETT STEVENS

Racketeers

All In The Racket, by William E. Weeks and Edwin Seaver. Charles Boni, Paper Books. \$0.50.

All in the Racket is a swift-moving, muck-raking tale of a murder frame-up perpetrated by a police inspector against a young

thief, who wouldn’t “cough up.” In a sharp staccato style, the authors have told an enthralling underworld story—but a tale with a doomed gangster as hero, a yarn exposing corruption in high places.

Weeks, who supplied the story, is a Boston, Mass., attorney. His collaborator, Edwin Seaver, is familiar to *New Masses* readers, the author of the fine novel, *The Company*. The book has a foreword by Arthur Garfield Hays, who points out that “eye-witness testimony” and prosecutors’ tricks have doomed many radicals, ranging from the Centralia I.W.W.’s to the Gastonia Communists, as well as so-called criminals.

—WALTER SNOW.

●

Le Nuage dans le Pantalon, by Vladimir Maiakowski, translated from the Russian into French by B. Gorriely and R. Baert, followed by other poems translated by N. Guterman. Paris: Les Revues.

This is the third in the series of *Nos Poetes* (Our Poets) which has been preceded by Pushkin and the poets of the *New Masses*, and is to be followed by Alexander Blok. These attractive, neatly-printed brochure-form books of some seventy pages extend the lyric expressions of the revolutionary poets of other lands into France, thereby strengthening the accord and understanding of the true internationale of culture. It is fitting and inevitable that Russia should supply the first and most of these translations. Perhaps these poems will prove nutritive to France, the sponsor of effete ejaculations. France needs the ardor of social attack and the new prospects. And perhaps she will blame herself for what is weak in Maiakowski: the influence of the *precieuse*, the bohemian. We find in these poems of Maiakowski two intensities: the intensity of revolution and the intensity of the thwarted articulation.

HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN.



lyso
dallefer



luogo
d'altre

BOOKS ABROAD

Nouvelle Age Litteraire by Henry Poulaille. Librairie Valois, Paris.

Henry Poulaille believes that literature—all literature—is breathing its last. The reason? The advent of the radio, the cinema, television. Nevertheless, he has gone to the trouble of writing a 438-page volume about what he calls *The New Literary Age*.

Throughout the book, however, its author never fails to sound the clarion again and again for this “new” literature which he says must come and of which there are already precursive indications. The major portion of his work is devoted to these “précurseurs de cette littérature neuve.” Not a stone is left unturned in a procrustean effort to show the new within the womb of the old. A French “Newer Spirit.” Poulaille, too, by the way, thinks that Sherwood Anderson is a proletarian writer. He has even managed to make room for Eugene O’Neil and Eugene Jolas in this exclusive domain. And whom have you? The names of a thousand and one scribblers of petty-bourgeois pedigree are offered as “précurseurs” of something or other that the author never quite clearly formulates. Evasion, eclecticism and general confusion characterize the whole book.

Speaking of Barbusse: “What can be more remarkable than to write in the service of an idea. And in this light, the works of religious inspiration—I mean the true ones—will long remain the most beautiful. . . . Looked upon from this viewpoint, the works of Barbusse appear of a formidable solidity.” But aside from this “formidable solidity,” the work of Barbusse, like that of Upton Sinclair (!), has but transitional value, Poulaille thinks. Michelet and George Sorel are cited as high authorities on the question of the social significance of art and the ultra-reactionary Claudel is ranked with Ramuz, Bloy and Hardy as “one of the crowd” that is ushering in—well, something or other that’s different, anyway.

In the United States there exists a proletarian magazine of violent radicalism, the *New Masses*. Radicalism there has nothing in common with ours. So they designate everything of a libertarian tendency. Some contributors to this magazine are Upton Sinclair, John Dos Passos, Floyd Dell, as well as some authentic workers (Italics mine—S.B.). It is one of the most curious magazines. . . I do not say that there are not some mighty strange viewpoints among its editors. There is the tendency to emphasize titles like thief or murderer just as in France one might sign Mr. X of the French Academy. . . . But apart from that the magazine has a proud bearing.”

No more appropriate conclusion than Lenin’s oft-quoted remark could be cited here to characterize this hopeless mass of petty-bourgeois intellectual gallimaufry: “People bend every effort to conceive something extraordinary, and in their zeal to intellectualize, they become ridiculous.”

—SAMUEL BRODY

Erich Weinert Spricht. International Arbeiter Verlag, Berlin.

Erich Weinert is Germany’s best known agitator-poet. Ginkel, with his bore-hammer rhythms, and Becher’s verbal thunders have stirred broad attention. But Weinert, with his solid ringing voice, is greeted with applause wherever he personally appears to read his poems. And he appears night after night. The workers anticipate something sharp and sarcastic, pregnant with grim humor. They are seldom disappointed. For Weinert, catching the mood of the minute into ready verse, challenges with healthy satire.

His first volume contains some of his best poetical agitations. Sacco and Vanzetti, Unemployment, Censorship, the “Bonzen”, as the social-democratic politicians are termed, come in for consideration. Roll of drums, shrill of factory whistles, voices of hunger and rebellion give swing to the poems which are known everywhere in the Germany of today.

Although a sensitive reader of poetry might protest against the amount of soapboxery in them, one cannot deny their effectiveness. Weinert is most happy to have voiced the passionate protest and aspirations of the working class.

Berlin, Germany.

—ED FALKOWSKI.

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Es gibt ein anderes Amerika! by Israel Kassan. Der Strom Verlag, Berlin.

This book though written in German, is as American as Broadway or Gastonia or Imperial Valley. The titles of the poems speak for themselves—“The Day After the Elections”, “The Building Trades Worker”, “American Justice”, “Coal Strike in Colorado”.

The author of *Es gibt ein anderes Amerika!* is a German worker now living in New York. His book doesn’t contain a single poem which is not directly concerned with the class war in the United States. The poems have their shortcomings; they suffer from didacticism and lack technical resourcefulness. But they have social passion and revolutionary understanding, and these are still rare enough in the literature produced in this country to be important for their own sake.

The book is illustrated with drawings from the *New Masses* and has an unusually striking cover. It contains an introduction by Dr. Alfons Goldschmidt, well-known in Germany as a leftwing publicist and an active figure in the German Workers International Relief.

—A. B. MAGIL.

WORKERS' ART

A monthly department for reports and discussion of Workers' Cultural Activities.

The Mill Workers Produce a Play

Comrades:

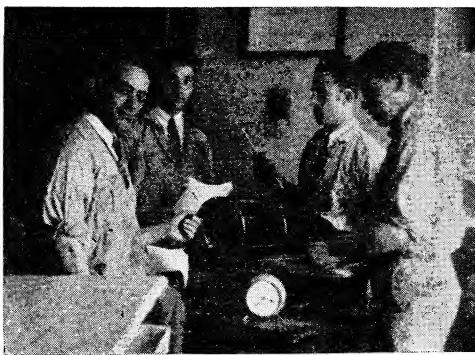
Members of the National Textile Workers Union in New Bedford planned a celebration for the second anniversary of the New Bedford strike on April 13, 1930. The Union arranged for mass meetings all over the city. But the workers felt that they wanted something more in which they could express their fiery memories of the great struggle.

So a group of workers, most of them who had been among the best fighters in the strike and are still leading fighters in the New Bedford mills, got together informally and wrote a play. The idea for it, and the play itself came from Anton Ferrira. Manuel Perry, another mill worker gave a hand on it. Others suggested changes, worked out details. They called their play *The Life of a Worker*. In it they portrayed a typical worker developing through exploitation and struggle into a member of a revolutionary union.

The Life of a Worker is a crude and simple piece of work. This group of revolutionary textile workers who wrote it without assistance, know nothing of "literature" and have no conscious literary desires. Their only aim was to produce a dramatic utterance of their own class experience, in which as many workers as possible (as well as their worker-audience) could participate. They achieved this with a rough proletarian force and directness that proved more effective with the masses than any well-behaved and well-dressed "literature" or "drama" could have been.

I don't know how the group found time to rehearse and do all the other work involved in producing their play, for each of these workers is active day and night in his union. But they found the time. Between meetings, demonstrations, and the countless duties of the class struggle they rehearsed, built their own settings made and distributed leaflets, sold tickets. (W. T. Murdoch, organizer, recounts that during the first rehearsals they used real clubs for nightsticks, and they took their parts so seriously, two of the actors were knocked cold.)

The play was a great success and was given before an enthusiastic overflow audience of New Bedford mill workers. The merriment was great when a worker like Neto, who was one of the lead-



Issuing Spartacus, monthly mimeographed paper of the Hungarian Workers Club, New York. In the photo:

Wm. Zimmerman, S. Mayer, I. Spitzer and A. Austen. Photo by Theo. Black.

ers in the bloody clash of 5,000 workers with the police force at the Dartmouth mill gates last January, was seen acting the part of a cop and quite realistically clubbing another union leader, Anton Ferrira, who took the part of the Worker. The actors needed no coaching to act the part of: Seab, Picket Captain, Young Worker, Workers' Wife, Strikers, etc.

The play was often written only in outline. The speeches, of organizers, cops, judges and others were often left to the actors. They knew these parts well enough from life. A stage collection made in the play was continued thru the audience by one of the actors while the play went on. The audience contributed as they never had before. The performance was splendid. Naively and unconsciously they brought to their little stage that evening a revelation of the new Workers Art in creation.

For weeks afterwards the workers in New Bedford kept asking for another performance of *The Life of a Worker*. The play was given again on August 23 and the textile workers are planning to give it in Boston and perhaps elsewhere.

It must be stated in conclusion that *The Life of a Worker* as played in New Bedford was not written and performed through any motive or conception of Workers Art, but solely in order to raise funds for the defense of August Pinto, one of the bravest workers in the great New Bedford strike, who has now been six months in prison for Union activity and is in danger of deportation. Nevertheless, the whole affair revealed eloquently, if unconsciously, the deep hunger of the workingclass for expression in art and the great ability of the workers to create their own art, a Workers Art—powerful and indispensable weapon in the class struggle.

New Bedford, Mass.

—MARTIN RUSSAK

A Letter from North China

Dear Comrades in America:

We send you good news: Twenty seven radical magazines and societies have just organized into the Federation of Proletarian Culture of North China. They are all under the banner of Marxism and stand solidly for the main requisite that every writer in the Federation must actively participate in the class struggle and against Imperialism.

Our organ, *Eve*, will be published three times a month from now on. The renewed No. 1, will appear on August 1 and features articles against war and Imperialism. In this number we recommend the *New Masses* to the workers and students of China as the only review of revolutionary literature and art in America.

We are also opening another bookshop in Tientsin. Beside the *New Masses* we want also to introduce American proletarian novels like *The Jungle*, *Boston*, *Jews Without Money*, *The 42nd Parallel*, *Daughter of Earth* and others. We ask you to help us in this.

We have arranged to handle the *New Masses* thru the branches of the Federation and the bookshops of North China and I enclose complete lists for the purpose.

On behalf of Miss Hsie-ping-ing, I have mailed you a copy of *A Chinese Amazon*, translated into English, which was written by her during her days in the Chinese Army in their Northern Expedition from Canton three years ago. It is not a proletarian novel by any means, but it will give you an idea of the birth of a new nation as it was dreamed of by the youth of China at that time. As the moment of the revival of the Chinese Revolution is here, and in view of the fact this revolution will be a lot different from the one in 1926-27, the book may have some historical value.

You will hear from us again and often. Meanwhile The Federa-

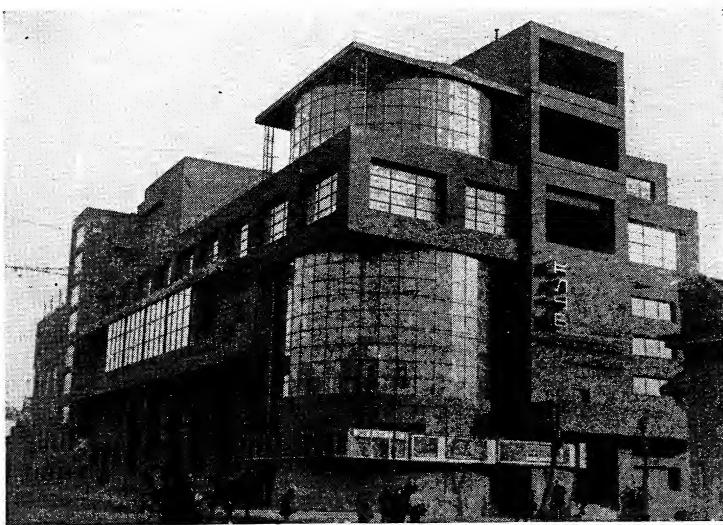
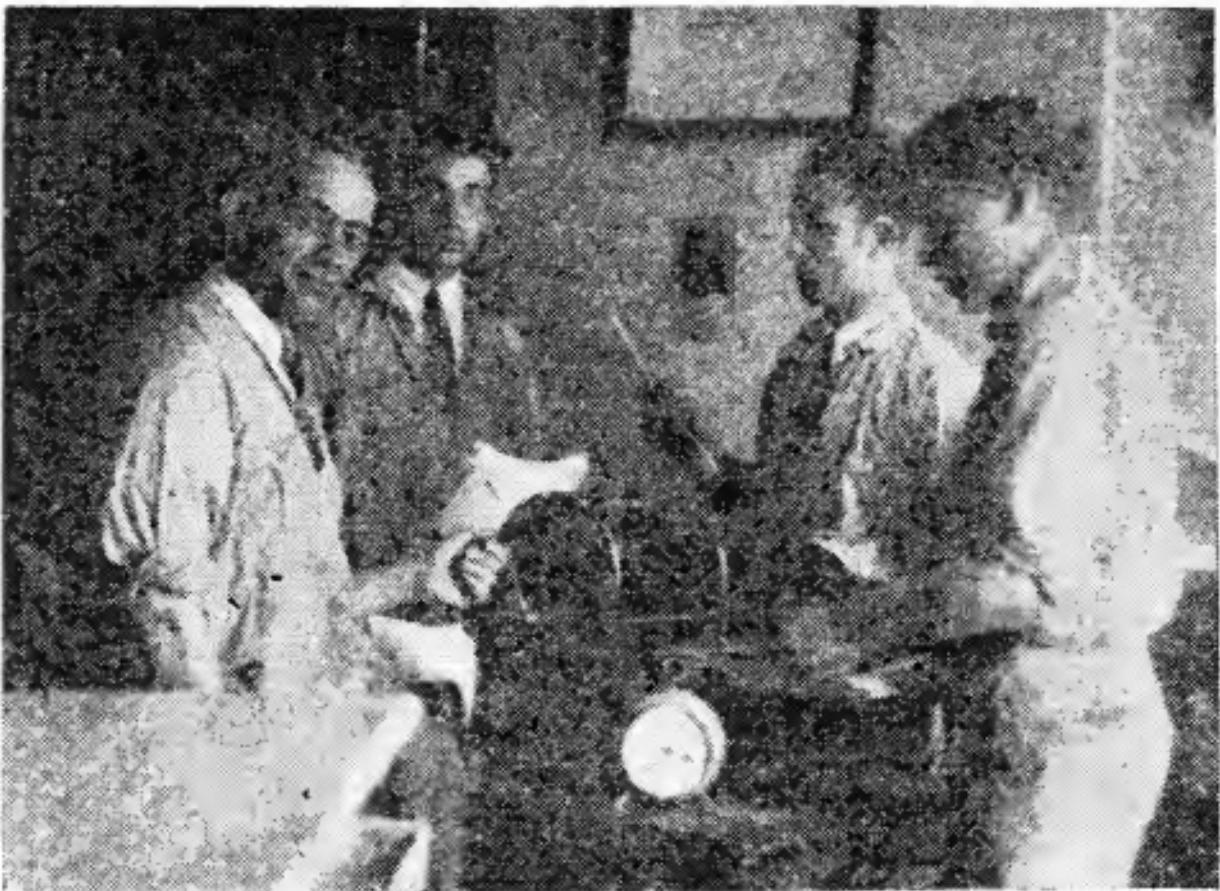


Photo by Press Cliche

A WORKERS CLUB IN SOVIET RUSSIA: The newly built Municipal Workers Clubhouse in Moscow. Built in the modern manner, it provides airy reading rooms, auditorium, stage, movie screen, etc.

*Issuing Spartacus,
monthly mimeo-
graphed paper of the
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Club, New York. In
the photo:*



*Wm. Zimmerman, S.
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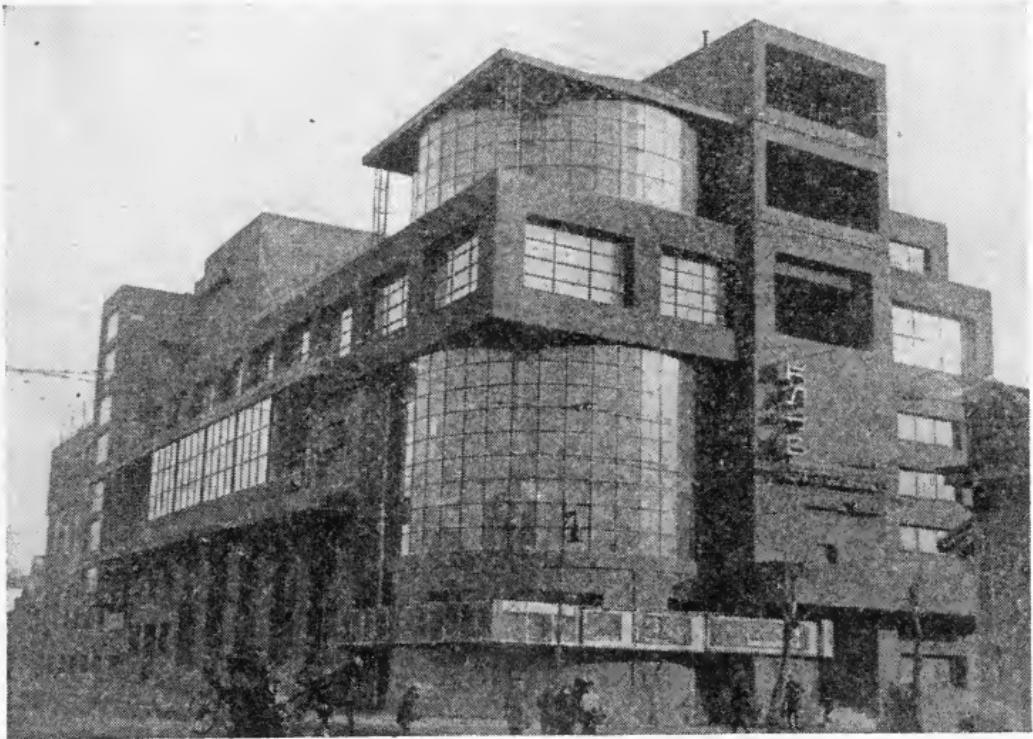


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A WORKERS CLUB IN SOVIET RUSSIA: The newly built Municipal Workers Clubhouse in Moscow. Built in the modern manner, it provides airy reading rooms, auditorium, stage, movie screen, etc.



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tion of Proletarian Culture of North China sends fraternal greetings to the workers and students of America, to the John Reed Club, the *New Masses* and all comrades.

Fraternally,

Tientsin, North China

K. CHANG.

Scandinavian Workers Clubs

Comrade Editors:

The Scandinavian Workers Club of Brooklyn Is organizing a dramatic group for the coming winter. We have in mind the production of the one-act plays *Mr. God Is Not In* by Harbor Allen and *Money* by Michael Gold. Please advise us of any other one-act plays for workers that are available.

The Club is one of three Scandinavian Workers Clubs in New York and Brooklyn with a membership of about 150. We have about 500 readers in this territory for our weekly *Ny Tid*, published in Chicago.

Last winter we organized a small drama group and this year we plan to make it a permanent part of our activities.

Since our membership is actively engaged in the struggle we have had but little time to develop the cultural side of our activity. Our members are active in the trade union movement, for the International Labor Defense, and the Communist Party. The *Daily Worker* and the *New Masses* receive our support and the membership is kept well in touch with books, pamphlets and all working class literature.

We are anxious to receive the co-operation of the John Reed Club for a series of lectures for the fall and winter. Busy as they are, we hope they give us a hand.

There is hardly need to add that the club members are in full accord with what the *New Masses* is doing for the development of a revolutionary Workers Art. We know of its value in the struggle.

Fraternally,

HARRY NILSSON.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Will Proletarians Write?

Dear Editors:

The great wonder to me is that workers write at all. For the last two months, I have been a phone book carrier, putting in an average of twelve hours a day lugging around a canvas bag, crammed with directories and weighing a hundred pounds if an ounce. Most of the jobless stiffs who take a fling at the racket throw it up at the end of the second day, tho they may be well broken to hard labor and need the jack like nobody's business. Well, the point is that when I drag my benumbed carcass homeward about 8:00 p. m., it is all I can do to keep awake thru supper and a half hour with the *Daily Worker* afterward; as for writing a solitary line of revolutionary prose or poetry, flaming or otherwise!

I had largely confined my posterior to stools and office chairs in the months before taking a carrier's job, and my proletarian youth, while not out of mind, had lost some of its jagged actualities in the wash of the subconscious or unconscious, whatever you choose. I refer to the bald and unpleasant truth that drudgery tends to make the worker stupid. No matter whether he has been "intelligent" to start with: brutal work will reduce his life to brutal terms, in which reading a toplofty magazine like the *New Masses*, let alone writing for it, seems obscenely irrelevant to reality.

New York, N. Y. FRED R. MILLER.

"Prosperity" in Pa.

New Masses:

A word from the coal-mining section:

The Pennsylvania Railroad, which is to say Altoona, has hit upon the novel scheme of giving their employees a week's vacation each month, business is falling off, the stores are cutting their advertising, the newspapers are cutting forces, and cutting wages; and prosperity here is still around that corner wherever it is. Strange to say, a 40 page paper can cut to 12 pages and then print business prosperity news on the front page. It looks as if things will have to get very much worse before they get much better.

Altoona, Pa. FREDERICK COVER.

From a Nice Boss

New Masses:

The working stiff has always been socked hard enough before, but with six million unemployed on the streets now, the boss doesn't even put a kid glove on his fist anymore.

Here's a sample from a supervisor over a string of New Jersey chain stores, one of which I "manage":

"It is necessary to call your attention to the carelessness in which I have found some of the stores on my recent trip. *Don't forget you are very fortunate to be one of the Army of employed as the army of unemployed is growing daily.* We have any amount of experienced applicants in this line of business for positions and we will

not tolerate any carelessness on the part of the manager or their assistants.

I do not care to be hardboiled, but I must have as near 100% efficiency as it is possible to get from any organization."

Nice, sweet fellows, the bosses, aren't they? Go to it *New Masses*. Give 'em hell!

Newark, N. J.

J. MARTIN.

Critics Wanted

Dear Comrades:

Here in the backwoods we sometimes wonder when the *New Masses* will emerge from the old hangover of "bookreviewing." I mean "reviewing" books instead of criticising them. The impressionistic, literarious, "clever" stuff of the Kenneth Fearing or Bernard Smith type has simply no place in a magazine like the N. M. Who the hell cares whether "Stirling Bowen is potentially an original" or if "Mr. Calverton's paragraph on Poe is open to serious objections."

What we want is no subjective reactions but Marxian analysis. If they can somehow help it, let your reviewers stop trying so hard to be authorities on craftsmanship. A little digging at sociological roots and some consideration of objective effects will do them a world of good.

Take for example Horace Gregory's review of Margaret Anderson's book last issue. It was well-done and interesting but not sharp enough from a class viewpoint. Why be a gentleman because the book was written by a lady? In contrast take Evans' review of *Only Saps Work* in the same issue. It was a swell job, colorful, analytical and the kind of stuff we ought to have in *New Masses*.

Sincerely,

Davenport, Iowa.

TOM MOORE.

Black and White in S. Africa

Dear Editors:

Being twenty-six and having had 8 years of killing labor in America, I returned to South Africa somewhat of a wreck. A worker sure has to hump in your country!

There are 4000 unemployed whites in this town now, out of a total white population of 20,000. The blacks are doing the unskilled labor and the semi-skilled, too. Auto mechanics are being ousted for cheaper black labor and South Africa is learning that the native is quite intelligent, all the bunk to the contrary. It's a fine scene for the revolutionist to be observing.

The natives are becoming interested in Communism too, and the minister of justice, who is scared stiff together with the business men, has gotten out the Riotous Assemblies Act, which is sure going to be hell against both black and white workers.

While I was in the States, I watched for the *New Masses*. Since I can't get rid of the habit, here's my subscription.

Johannesburg, S. A.

J. BRONSON.



A. B. Magil—born 1905 in Philadelphia. Graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in February, 1925, emerging abysmally ignorant of the world he lived in. Came to New York in the fall of 1925 and began his education with a two-month course in job-hunting. The Passaic strike, the needle trades struggles of 1926 and a few other experiences turned him Red. Has contributed poems, reviews, literary and political articles to the *Daily Worker*, *New Masses*, *The Communist*, *Labor Defender*, etc. Formerly on the staff of the *Daily Worker*. Member of the John Reed Club.

In This Issue

Herman Spector—young New York writer, has worked during the past year as truck driver, street car conductor and on other jobs. More of his stories will appear in coming issues.

Hans Scherfig—is a young Danish artist who spent a few months in America and has now returned to Copenhagen. First appearance in *New Masses*.

Agnes Smedley—author of *Daughter of Earth* and correspondent for the European press, writes from Shanghai, China.

William Seigel—New York artist, book illustrator, has contributed to many publications.

Joseph Kalar—is a lumber worker in Minnesota and contributing editor to *New Masses*.

Virna Haffer—making her first *New Masses* appearance lives in Tacoma, Wash.

H. T. Tsiang—is author of *Poems of the Chinese Revolution*. His story in this issue is a chapter from his first novel, *Chinese Red*, which he has just completed.

Kenneth Fearing—is author of the book of verse *Angel Arms* and contributes poems, short stories and criticism to various publications.

Horace Gregory—is author of *Chelsea Rooming House* a book of poems just published.

William Gropper—has completed *Alay Oop!* a circus burlesque story in drawings to be published next month.

Hugo Gellert—has just finished a series of mural paintings in California. He is now back in New York.



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From Our Critic in Moscow

New Masses Editors & Contribs:

This is unquestionably the most heroic period of the Russian Revolution. An indescribable shortage of products: neither meat, nor vegetables, nor fruit. The queues are long and omnipresent. There is a shortage of change; this petty annoyance makes life at times almost unbearable. Outwardly, it seems, life here has become incomparably harder than it was two years ago, or even ten months ago. I am mentioning these things because of the many tourists who come here, notice the obvious hardships, and are likely to go back to the States and spread utterly false rumors about the real situation. And the real situation here is as I have characterized it in the opening sentence—*heroic!!!*

Victory along every front. Next to the amazing growth of collective farms, the greatest achievement is of course, the complete liquidation of unemployment. Two years ago such a hope would appear hopelessly Utopian. Now it is an accomplished fact. There is no unemployment in the Soviet Union. Quite the opposite is true. There are not enough workers. Industry is developing at such a dizzying pace that it absorbs more of human labor power than the village can release. The building operations are unfolding all over the Union on a gigantic scale. Even the streets in Moscow have changed during the last ten months. In the center, as well as along the main streets, the wretched cobble stones of old have given way to concrete or asphalt. There are more motor cars and taxis rushing along the thoroughfares. Moreover, the sidewalks are more crowded than ever. The five day plan while it insures the continuity of production, makes every day a holiday for one fifth of the population; this is felt on the streets, in the parks, in the theatres, in the movies, in the museums.

But figures speak louder than words. Listen! If you take the industrial achievements of the year 1926-1927 as 100, then the figures for the following three years are respectively as follows: 127, 159, 210. And the year 1930-1931 promises to give the incredible figure 310! Hardships? Certainly. The Russians are tightening their belts. But there is not the slightest suggestion of depression or martyrdom or weariness. Everywhere, one feels determination, pride, and a mighty revolutionary enthusiasm. I wonder whether I manage to communicate to you my deep feeling of joy as I write of these things. I wish I could transmit to you one-hundredth part of the thrill of living in the midst of all this. You in America need it, and need it badly.

Yours for the Revolution,

Moscow, USSR, August 2, 1930.

J. Q. NEETS.

To All Revolutionary Writers

Three years have elapsed since the last conference of the International Bureau of Revolutionary Literature.

Since then, Panait Istrati and Diego Rivera, two representatives of the 1927 Moscow conference, have landed on the other side of the barricades.

But meanwhile in Russia, Germany, Poland and Hungary an impressive new group of proletarian writers have appeared. We will have these reinforcements at the next conference of the International Bureau of Revolutionary Literature to take place in Charkov in October.

The problems of the revolutionary writers in America, Czechoslovakia, England, and Japan will receive a great deal of attention; the question of better organization will be discussed.

The program of the 1927 conference was developed beyond expectations in three years following. Organization has grown. New periodicals have been developed. A whole important new force of proletarian writers has sprung up.

The question of literature, book publishing, the press, workers correspondence will be discussed; as well as the role of the revolutionary writers in the fight against Fascism, White terror and Imperialist war.

From America Michael Gold, John Dos Passos, William Gropper and others have been invited. All delegates attending the conference must arrive in Moscow between the 15th and 20th of October. Groups of revolutionary writers who have not received an invitation and wish to participate, can write immediately for details to

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